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THE ROMANCES OF

# ALEXANDRE DUMAS

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# THE BLACK TULIP

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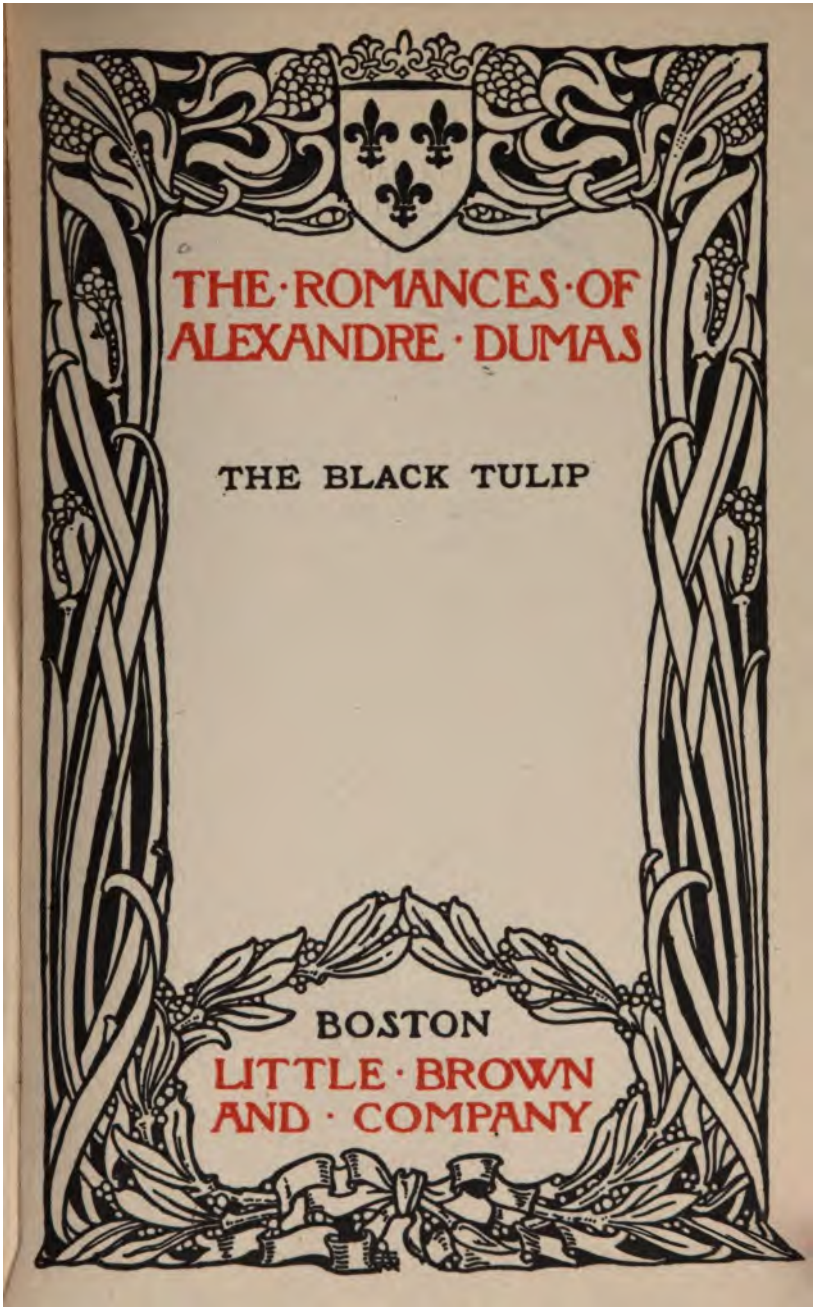

# THE · ROMANCES · OF ALEXANDRE · DUMAS

## THE BLACK TULIP

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# INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE 20th of August, 1672, was by no means the first occasion on which the Dutch had demonstrated their claim to the very highest rank among ungrateful peoples.

Witness the pathetic figure of the "Great Deliverer," the first William of Orange, fighting almost single-handed the whole mighty power of Philip II., and standing alone amid the jealous envy of those whose release from a hateful, galling despotism was his only purpose in life. He founded the Dutch Republic *in spite of* his fellow-countrymen, rather than in concert with them; and it was not until the hand of the paid assassin struck him down that they knew how truly he had been the "Father William" of them and their country.

Who that has read in Motley's engrossing pages the story of John of Olden-Barneveldt has not been lost in wonder (and in disgust) at the blind, unreasoning spirit of jealousy and distrust,

which persistently thwarted the earnest, devoted, single-hearted efforts of that great-souled man, which accused him, of all men on earth, of treachery and subserviency to the enemies of the Republic, and which finally inflicted upon him the most shameful of all deaths, — death upon the gallows?

The fate of Olden-Barneveldt emphasizes, more strongly than any other single circumstance, that characteristic of the Dutch, which has always made it impossible for them to reap the full benefit of the lessons which they have taught to other nations by their persistent, self-sacrificing heroism.

The later exemplification of the same characteristic in the scene described in the opening chapters of "The Black Tulip" was only the less striking in so far as the services of the De Witts to the Republic had been less eminent and noteworthy than those of Barneveldt, whose lot it was to live at a more momentous epoch.

As in the earlier period the great Pensionary fell a victim to the machinations of Prince Maurice of Orange, or of those who used his revered name as a cloak for their designs, while they scattered broadcast the charge that Barneveldt was engaged in secret and traitorous negotiations with Spain, that is to say, with the power, against which his whole life was one long tireless struggle: so were

the De Witts sacrificed to the youthful ambition of another Prince of Orange, who allowed himself to be made the tool of the envious detractors of the patriotic brothers, so far as to give at least his silent assent to the pitiless persecution which ended so fatally. The subsequent career of this prince upon the English throne did much to efface this blot upon his fame.

The passionate fondness of this same people for the peaceful art of floriculture and the historical Harlem tulip craze furnished M. Dumas with a congenial theme, which, interwoven with the incident of the deposit with the innocent tulip-fancier of the Grand Pensionary's correspondence with the awe-inspiring Court of France, was worked over by the matchless story-teller into the romance of "The Black Tulip."

# LIST OF CHARACTERS.

**Period, 1672–1675.**

WILLIAM, PRINCE OF ORANGE, afterward William III. King of England.

LOUIS XIV., King of France.

CORNELIUS DE WITT, inspector of dikes at the Hague.

JOHN DE WITT, his brother, Grand Pensionary of Holland.

COLONEL VAN DEKEN, aide-de-camp to William of Orange.

DR. CORNELIUS VAN BAERLE, a tulip-fancier, godson of Cornelius de Witt.

MYNHEER ISAAC BOXTEL, his rival.

MARQUIS DE LOUVOIS.

COUNT TILLY, Captain of the Cavalry of the Hague.

MYNHEER BOWELT, } deputies.
MYNHEER D'ASPEREN, }

THE RECORDER OF THE STATES.

MASTER VAN SPENSER, a magistrate at Dort.

TYCKALAER, a surgeon at the Hague.

GERARD DOW.

MYNHEER VAN SYSTENS, Burgomaster of Harlem and President of its Horticultural Society.

CRAEKE, confidential servant of John de Witt.

GRYPHUS, a jailer.

ROSA, his daughter, in love with Cornelius van Baerle.

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# THE BLACK TULIP.

## CHAPTER I.

### A GRATEFUL PEOPLE.

On the 20th of August, 1672, the city of the Hague, whose streets were ordinarily so neat and trim, and withal so tranquil that every day seemed like Sunday; the city of the Hague, with its shady park, its noble trees reaching out over the roofs of the Gothic dwellings, and its broad canals so calm and smooth that they resembled mammoth mirrors, wherein were reflected its myriad of church-towers, whose graceful shapes recalled some city of the Orient, — the city of the Hague, the capital of the Seven United Provinces, saw all its arteries swollen to bursting with a black and red flood of impetuous, breathless, eager citizens, who with knives in their belts, muskets on their shoulders, or clubs in their hands, were hurrying on toward the Buytenhof, a redoubtable prison, whose grated windows still frown on the beholder, where Cornelius de Witt, brother of the former Grand Pensionary of Holland, was languishing in confinement, on a charge of attempted murder preferred against him by the surgeon Tyckelaer.

If the history of that time — and especially of the year in the middle of which our narrative commences — were not indissolubly connected with the two names just mentioned, the few explanatory pages which follow might appear quite supererogatory; but we must first warn our old friend, the indulgent reader, whom it is our invariable custom on the first page to promise to entertain, and to whom we do our best to redeem our promise in the subsequent pages, that this explanation is as indispensable to the right understanding of our tale as to that of the great event itself on which it is based.

Cornelius de Witt, Ruart de Pulten, — that is to say, Inspector of Dikes, — ex-burgomaster of Dort, his native town, and member of the Assembly of the States of Holland, was forty-nine years of age when the Dutch people, weary of the Republic as it was administered by John de Witt, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, suddenly conceived a most violent affection for the Stadtholderate, which had been abolished forever in Holland by the Perpetual Edict forced by John de Witt upon the United Provinces.

In accordance with the common experience that public opinion in its capricious flights seeks always to identify a principle with some man whose name is connected with its promulgation, the people saw the personification of the Republic in the stern features of the brothers De Witt (those Romans of Holland), who disdained to pander to the whims of the mob, but were the unyielding upholders of liberty without license and prosperity without extravagance; while on the other hand the thought of the Stadtholderate recalled to the popular mind the stooping head and the grave and thoughtful lineaments

of young William of Orange, whom his contemporaries christened the "Taciturn," — a name which has come down to our own day.

The brothers De Witt were very gentle in their treatment of Louis XIV., whose moral influence throughout Europe they perceived to be steadily increasing, and whose material supremacy over Holland they had been made to feel in that marvellous campaign of the Rhine, made famous by the exploits of that hero of romance, the Comte de Guiche, and celebrated in song by Boileau, — a campaign which had laid the power of the United Provinces prostrate in three short months.

Louis XIV. had long been the enemy of the Dutch, who insulted or ridiculed him to their heart's content, although it must be said that they generally vented their spleen through the medium of French refugees. Their national pride held him up as the Mithridates of the Republic. The brothers De Witt therefore had to contend against active opposition, arising in the first place from the fact that a vigorous resistance had been conducted by them against the inclination of the nation, and, furthermore, from that feeling of weariness which is natural to all vanquished people, who hope that a new leader may be able to save them from ruin and shame.

This new leader — quite ready to appear on the political stage and to measure himself against Louis XIV., however towering the destiny of the Grand Monarque might seem to be — was William, Prince of Orange, son of William II., and grandson, by his mother Henrietta Stuart, of Charles I. of England, — the *taciturn* youth whom we have referred to as the person to whom the popular mind at once reverted when the Stadtholderate was mentioned.

This young man was in 1672 twenty-two years of age. John de Witt, who was his tutor, had brought him up with the view of making this youth of royal lineage a good citizen of the Republic. Loving his country better than he did his pupil, the master had by the Perpetual Edict extinguished the hope which the young Prince might have entertained of one day becoming Stadtholder. But God laughs at the presumption of man, who assumes to make and unmake earthly sovereigns without consulting the King of Heaven. Through the capricious humor of the Dutch and the terror inspired by Louis XIV. He overturned the policy of the Grand Pensionary, and repealed the Perpetual Edict by re-establishing the office of Stadtholder in favor of William of Orange, for whom He had decreed a lofty destiny still buried in the mysterious depths of the future.

The Grand Pensionary bowed before the will of his fellow-citizens. Cornelius de Witt, however, was more obstinate; and notwithstanding all the threats of death from the Orangist rabble, who besieged him in his house at Dort, he stoutly refused to sign the act by which the office of Stadtholder was restored. Moved by the tears and entreaties of his wife, he at last complied, but affixed to his signature the two letters V. C., which signified *vi coactus*, or "done under duress."

It was only by a miracle that he escaped alive from the hands of his foes on that occasion.

John de Witt derived no advantage from his ready compliance with the wishes of his fellow-citizens. Only a few days later an attempt was made to murder him, in which he was severely although not mortally wounded.

This by no means accorded with the necessities of the

Orange faction. The two brothers so long as they lived were a constant obstacle to its plans; nevertheless, the Orangists changed their tactics for the moment (leaving themselves free at any time to revert to their first method), and undertook with the aid of slander and calumny to effect the purpose which they had not been able to effect by the aid of the poniard.

It is seldom ordained by the will of God that a great man shall be at hand at the right moment to carry a great work to a successful conclusion; and for that reason, when such a providential concurrence of circumstances does occur, history is prompt to record the name of the fortunate individual, and to hold him up to the admiration of posterity.

But when Satan interposes in human affairs to cast a blight upon some happy existence, or to overthrow a kingdom, it as seldom happens that he does not find at his side some wretched tool, in whose ear he has but to whisper a word to set him at once about his task.

The wretched tool who was at hand to be the agent of this dastardly plot was one Tyckelaer, whom we have already mentioned, — a surgeon by profession.

He lodged an information to the effect that Cornelius de Witt, rendered desperate by the repeal of the Perpetual Edict (as he had proved by the letters affixed to his signature thereto), and inflamed with hatred for William of Orange, had hired an assassin to deliver the Republic from its new Stadtholder, and that he, Tyckelaer, was the person thus chosen; but that stung with remorse for having for one moment admitted the idea of the deed which he was asked to perpetrate, he had preferred rather to reveal the crime than to commit it.

This disclosure was, indeed, well calculated to call forth a furious outbreak among the Orange faction. The Procureur-Fiscal caused the arrest of Cornelius at his own house on the 16th of August, 1672; and the Ruart de Pulten, noble John de Witt's noble brother, was forced to undergo, in one of the rooms in the Buytenhof, the preliminary torture by means of which they hoped to extort from him, as from the vilest criminals, a confession of his alleged plot against William of Orange.

But Cornelius was possessed not only of a great mind, but also of a great heart. He belonged to that race of martyrs who, being as constant in their political faith as their ancestors were in their religious belief, are enabled to meet suffering with a smiling face; and while he was stretched on the rack, he recited with a firm voice, and scanning the lines according to measure, the first strophe of the "Justum ac tenacem" of Horace. He made no confession, and at last tired out the fanaticism, as well as the strength, of his persecutors.

The judges, nevertheless, completely exonerated Tyckelaer; while they sentenced Cornelius to be deposed from all his offices and dignities, to pay all the costs of the trial, and to be banished from the soil of the Republic forever.

The insane passions of the people, to whose best interests Cornelius de Witt had ever been conscientiously devoted, were to some extent appeased by this judgment against one who was an entirely innocent as well as a great man; but as we shall see, it failed to content them.

The Athenians, who have left behind them a pretty tolerable reputation for ingratitude, must in this respect

yield precedence to the Dutch. They contented themselves with banishing Aristides.

John de Witt, at the first intimation of the charge brought against his brother, had resigned his office of Grand Pensionary. He, too, received a noble recompense for his devotion to his country, taking with him into the retirement of private life his burden of anxiety and his scarcely-healed scars, which are only too often the sole guerdon obtained by honorable men who are guilty of having labored for their country, forgetful of their own interests.

Meanwhile, William of Orange urged on the course of events by every means in his power, eagerly waiting for the time when the people, by whom he was idolized, should have made of the bodies of the brothers the two steps up which he might ascend to the chair of Stadtholder.

Thus it was that on the 20th of August, 1672, as we have already stated in the beginning of this chapter, the whole town was crowding toward the Buytenhof, to witness the departure of Cornelius de Witt from prison on his way to lifelong banishment, and to see what traces the torture had left on the noble frame of the man who knew his Horace so well.

Let us hasten to add that this vast multitude, which was hurrying on toward the Buytenhof, was not influenced solely by the harmless desire of feasting their eyes with the spectacle; there were many who went there to play an active part in it, and to take upon themselves an office which they conceived had been badly filled, — that of the executioner.

There were, indeed, others with less hostile intentions

All that they cared for was the spectacle, always so attractive to the mob, whose instinctive pride is gratified to see him who has long occupied a lofty position prostrate in the dust.

"This Cornelius de Witt," they were saying, "this knight without fear, has he not been closely confined, and his courage shattered by the rack? Shall we not see him pale, streaming with blood, covered with shame?" Surely this was a sweet triumph for the bourgeoisie, who were even more consumed with envy than the common people, — a triumph in which every honest burgher of the Hague might well share.

"Moreover," hinted the Orange agitators interspersed through the crowd, whom they hoped to mould to their own purposes, and to use either as an instrument of attack or of menace, — "moreover, will there not be a fine opportunity all the way from the Buytenhof to the city gate to throw some handfuls of dirt or a few stones at this Ruart de Pulten, who not only conferred the dignity of Stadtholder on the Prince of Orange 'under duress,' as he claims, but who also intended to have him assassinated?"

"Besides which," the fierce enemies of France chimed in, "if the work were done well and bravely at the Hague, Cornelius would certainly not be allowed to go into exile, where he will renew his intrigues with France, and live with his infernal scoundrel of a brother, John, on the gold of the Marquis de Louvois."

In such a temper, people generally will run rather than walk, — which was the reason why the inhabitants of the Hague were hurrying so fast toward the Buytenhof.

Honest Tyckelaer, with a heart full of spite and

malice, and with no particular plan settled in his mind, was one of the foremost, being put forward by the Orange party as a very model of probity, national honor, and Christian charity.

This daring miscreant, embellishing his narrative with all the exaggerated rhetoric which his mind or his fertile imagination could supply, detailed the attempts which Cornelius de Witt had made to corrupt him, the sums of money which were promised, and the diabolical plans, which were all laid beforehand, to smooth away whatever difficulties might arise to obstruct his (Tyckelaer's) committing the murder.

Every phrase of his speech, eagerly listened to by the populace, called forth enthusiastic cheers for the Prince of Orange and yells of blind fury against the brothers De Witt.

The mob even fell to cursing the iniquitous judges who had allowed such a detestable criminal as the villain Cornelius to get off so cheaply.

Some of the agitators whispered, "He will be off; he will escape from us!"

Others replied, "A vessel is waiting for him at Scheveningen, — a French craft. Tyckelaer has seen her."

"Honest Tyckelaer! Hurrah for Tyckelaer!" the mob cried in chorus.

"And let us not forget," a voice exclaimed from the crowd, "that meanwhile John, who is as unmitigated a scoundrel as his brother, will also escape."

"And the two rogues will make merry in France with our money, — with the money for our vessels, our arsenals, and our dockyards, which they have sold to Louis XIV."

"Well, then, let us not allow them to depart!"

shouted one patriot, whose ideas had advanced farther than those of the others.

"Forward to the prison, to the prison!" echoed the crowd.

Amid such cries, the citizens ran along faster and faster, while muskets were brandishing, axes gleaming, and eyes shooting fire and flame.

No violence, however, had as yet been committed; and the file of horsemen who were guarding the approaches of the Buytenhof remained cool, unmoved, silent, much more formidable in their impassibility than this excited, yelling, threatening crowd of burghers. Motionless they sat, under the eye of their leader, the captain of the cavalry of the Hague, who had his sword drawn, but held it with its point downward, in a line with the straps of his stirrup.

This troop, the only defence of the prison, overawed by its firm attitude not only the disorderly, riotous mass of the populace, but also the detachment of the burgher-guard, which, being placed opposite the Buytenhof to support the soldiers in keeping order, gave countenance to the seditious uproar of the rioters by themselves shouting, —

"Hurrah for Orange! Down with the traitors!"

The presence of Tilly and his horsemen, indeed, exercised a salutary check on these civic warriors; but soon they worked themselves into a fine passion by their own yelling, and as they could not comprehend how any one could be endowed with physical courage and not manifest it by shouting at the top of his voice, they attributed the silence of the dragoons to cowardice, and advanced one step toward the prison, with all the turbulent mob following in their wake.

Thereupon Count Tilly rode forward alone to meet them, raising his sword slightly, as he demanded with a frown, —

"Well, gentlemen of the burgher-guard, why are you in motion, and what do you wish?"

The burghers brandished their muskets, repeating their cry, —

"Hurrah for Orange! Death to the traitors!"

"'Hurrah for Orange!' be it so," replied Tilly, "although I certainly am more partial to happy faces than to gloomy ones. 'Death to the traitors!' if you choose, so long as you confine your energy to shouting it. Shout 'Death to the traitors!' to your heart's content; but as to putting them to death in good earnest, I am here to prevent that, and I shall prevent it."

Then, turning round to his men, he gave the word of command, —

"Ready!"

The troopers obeyed orders with a precision which immediately caused the burgher-guard and the people to fall back in such haste and confusion as to excite the laughter of the cavalry-officer.

"There, there!" he exclaimed with that bantering tone which is peculiar to men of his profession, "be easy, my good fellows, my soldiers will not fire a shot; but, on the other hand, you must not advance one step toward the prison."

"And do you know, sir, that we have muskets?" roared the commandant of the burghers.

"By Jove, I can't very well help knowing it," said Tilly, "after the way you have been waving them before my eyes; but I beg you to observe also that we have

pistols, that the pistol carries admirably to a distance of fifty yards, and that you are only twenty-five from us."

"Death to the traitors!" cried the exasperated burghers.

"Bah!" growled the officer, "you keep saying the same thing over and over again. It is very tiresome."

With this, he resumed his post at the head of his troops, while the tumult grew fiercer and fiercer about the Buytenhof.

And yet the furious mob did not know that at the very moment when they were hot upon the scent of one of their victims, the other, as if hurrying to meet his fate, passed at a distance of not more than a hundred yards behind the groups of people and the dragoons on his way to the Buytenhof.

John de Witt had alighted from his coach with a servant, and was walking quietly across the courtyard of the prison.

Mentioning his name to the turnkey, who, however, knew him, he said, —

"Good morning, Gryphus; I have come to get my brother, Cornelius de Witt (who as you know is sentenced to perpetual banishment), and take him away from the city with me."

Thereupon the jailer, a sort of bear, trained to lock and unlock the gates of the prison, saluted him, and admitted him into the building, the doors of which were immediately closed upon him.

Ten yards farther on, John de Witt met a lovely young girl of about seventeen or eighteen, dressed in the national costume of the Frisian women, who courtesied prettily to him. Patting her cheek gently, he said to her,—

"Good morning, my pretty little Rosa; how is my brother?"

"Oh, Mynheer John!" the young girl replied, "I am not afraid of the harm which has been done to him. That's all over now."

"Pray, what are you afraid of, then, my dear?"

"I am afraid of the harm which they are going to do to him."

"Oh, yes," said De Witt, "you mean this rabble, don't you?"

"Do you hear them?"

"Yes, they are indeed in a state of great excitement; but when they see us, perhaps they will grow calmer, as we have never done them anything but good."

"Unfortunately, that is no reason at all," muttered the girl, as, in obedience to an imperative sign from her father, she withdrew.

"Indeed, child, what you say is only too true."

Then, as he pursued his way, he said to himself, —

"Here is a damsel who very likely does not know how to read, and who, consequently, has never read anything; and yet with one word she has epitomized a good part of the history of the world."

And with the same calm mien, but more melancholy than he had been on entering the prison, the Grand Pensionary proceeded toward the cell of his brother.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE TWO BROTHERS.

THE fair Rosa's gloomy forebodings were fully realized; for while John de Witt was climbing the narrow winding stairs which led to the prison of his brother Cornelius, the burghers did their best to have the troop of Tilly, which was in their way, removed.

Whereupon the rabble, in token of their appreciation of the good intentions of their militia-men, shouted lustily, "Hurrah for the burghers!"

Count Tilly, who was as prudent as he was firm, began to parley with the burghers, under the protection of the cocked pistols of his dragoons, doing his best to explain to them that his order from the States commanded him to guard the prison and its approaches with three companies.

"Why give such orders? Why guard the prison?" cried the Orangists.

"Ah!" replied M. de Tilly, "there you ask me at once more than I can tell you. I was told, 'Guard the prison,' and I obey orders. You, gentlemen, who are almost soldiers yourselves, ought to know that an order must never be discussed."

"But this order has been given to you so that the traitors may be enabled to leave the town."

"Very possibly, as the traitors are condemned to exile," replied Tilly.

"Who is responsible for this order?"

"The States, to be sure."

"The States are traitors."

"I don't know anything about that!"

"And you are a traitor yourself!"

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"Well, as to that, let us understand each other, my friends. Whom should I betray, — the States? Why, I cannot betray them, if while I am in their pay, I faithfully obey their orders."

Thereupon, the Count being so indisputably in the right that it was impossible to answer him, the uproar and threatening language were renewed with redoubled energy; but the Count replied to their extravagant and horrible imprecations with the utmost courtliness.

"My friends," said he, "uncock your muskets; one of them may go off by accident, and if the shot chanced to wound one of my men it would be the death of a good many of you. We should be very sorry for that, and you would perhaps be sorrier still, especially as neither of us has any such purpose."

"If you should do that," cried the burghers, "we should take our turn at the same game."

"Very well; but even were you to kill every man of us, those whom we had killed would be none the less dead."

"Then leave the place to us, and you will play the part of a good citizen."

"First of all," said Tilly, "I am not a citizen, but an officer, which is a very different thing; and, secondly, I am not a Hollander, but a Frenchman, and there the

distinction is even greater. I have to do with no one but the States, by whom I am paid; let me see an order from them to leave you in possession of the square, and I shall only be too glad to evacuate on the instant, for I am confoundedly bored here."

"Yes, yes!" cried a hundred voices, whose chorus was immediately swelled by five hundred others; "let us go to the Town-hall and see the deputies! Come on! Come on!"

"That 's it," Tilly muttered, as he saw the most violent among the crowd turning away; "go to the Town-hall and seek to procure the perpetration of a dastardly act, and you will see what answer you will get. Go, my fine fellows, go!"

The worthy officer relied on the honor of the magistrates, who, on their side, relied on his honor as a soldier.

"Suppose, Captain," said the first lieutenant in the Count's ear, "that the deputies refuse to grant what these madmen demand, and then send us a small reinforcement; that would not be so bad, would it?"

Meanwhile, John de Witt, whom we left climbing the stairs, after his conversation with the jailer Gryphus and his daughter Rosa, had reached the door of the cell, where on a mattress lay his brother Cornelius, who had, as we have seen, been subjected to the preliminary torture. The sentence of banishment having been pronounced, there was no occasion for inflicting the torture extraordinary.

Cornelius, prostrate on his bed, with wrists broken and fingers crushed, because he had refused to confess a crime he had not committed, was just beginning to breathe

freely once more, after three days of mortal agony, on being informed that his judges, at whose hands he had expected sentence of death, had decided to condemn him to banishment.

Endowed with an iron frame and a stout heart, how would he have disappointed his enemies, if they could have seen, in the gloomy depths of his cell in the Buytenhof, his pale face lighted up by the smile of the martyr, who having had a foretaste of the glory of heaven forgets that he has ever wallowed in earthly mire!

The Ruart, indeed, had already recovered all his powers, more by the force of his own strong will than by any care that had been bestowed upon him; and he was calculating how long the formalities of the law would still detain him in prison.

It was just at this moment that the combined shouts of the citizen-militia and the mob were at their loudest, and curses were being heaped upon the two brothers, mingled with dire threats against Captain Tilly, who stood a living rampart between them and their foes. The uproar, breaking against the walls of the prison like surf against the cliffs, reached even the prisoner's ears.

But threatening as was the sound, Cornelius took no steps to ascertain whence it arose; nor did he even take the trouble to rise and look out at the narrow iron-barred window, which gave access to the light and sound from without.

He was so inured to his never-ceasing pain that he had almost become indifferent to it. In fact he was conscious of such ecstasy in feeling that his soul and his mind were about to rise above all bodily ills, that it seemed to him as if that soul and that mind had already

escaped from their bondage to the flesh, and were floating in the air above his body, as the expiring flame from an almost extinct fire hovers above the embers on the hearth.

He was also thinking of his brother. It was his approach, doubtless, that thus made itself felt, through the mysterious agency which is now known as magnetism. At the very moment that John was so vividly present in the thoughts of Cornelius that his name was actually upon his lips, the door opened; John entered and hurried to the bedside of the prisoner, who stretched out his broken arms and his hands, tied up in bandages, toward that glorious brother, whom he had succeeded in surpassing not in services rendered to the country, but in the hatred which the Dutch bore him.

John tenderly kissed his brother on the forehead, and put his maimed hands gently back on the mattress.

"Cornelius, my poor brother," said he, "you are suffering great pain, are you not?"

"I suffer no longer since I see you, my brother."

"Oh, my poor dear Cornelius! I assure you that I grieve enough for both to see you in such a state."

"Indeed, I have thought more of you than of myself; and while they were torturing me I never thought of uttering a complaint, except once to say, 'Poor brother!' But now that you are here, let us forget it all. You have come to take me away, have you not?"

"I have."

"I am quite cured. Help me to get up, and you shall see how well I can walk."

"You will not have to walk far, dear brother, as I have my coach near the pond, behind Tilly's dragoons."

"Tilly's dragoons! Why are they near the pond?"

"Well," said the Grand Pensionary, with the melancholy smile which was habitual to him, "you see there is an idea that the people of the Hague would like to witness your departure, and there is some apprehension of a disturbance."

"Of a disturbance?" replied Cornelius, fixing his eyes on his embarrassed brother; "a disturbance?"

"Yes, Cornelius."

"Oh, that 's what I heard just now," said the prisoner, as if speaking to himself. Then turning to his brother, he continued, —

"There is a great crowd around the Buytenhof, is there not?"

"Yes, dear brother."

"But that being so, in order to come here — "

"Well?"

"How was it that they allowed you to pass?"

"You know well that we are not very popular, Cornelius," said the Grand Pensionary, with gloomy bitterness. "I came through back streets all the way."

"You hid yourself, John?"

"I wished to reach you without loss of time, and I did what people do in politics, or at sea when the wind is against them, — I beat to windward."

At this moment the noise in the square below seemed to redouble in fury. Tilly was parleying with the burghers.

"Well," said Cornelius, "you are a very skilful pilot, John; but I doubt whether you will be able to guide your brother out of the Buytenhof in such a heavy sea, and through the breakers of popular fury, as happily as

you conducted the fleet of Van Tromp past the shoals of the Scheldt to Antwerp."

"With the help of God, Cornelius, we 'll at least try," answered John; "but first of all, a word with you."

"What is it?"

The shouts began anew.

"Hark, hark!" continued Cornelius; "how angry these people are! Is it against you, or against me?"

"I should say it is against us both, Cornelius. I told you, my dear brother, that the Orange party, while assailing us with their absurd calumnies, have also made it a reproach against us that we have negotiated with France."

"What blockheads they are!"

"Very true; but nevertheless they make that reproach against us."

"And yet if these negotiations had been successful, they would have prevented the defeats of Rees, Orsay, Wesel, and Rheinberg; the Rhine would not have been crossed, and Holland might still consider herself invincible in the midst of her marshes and canals."

"All this is quite true, my dear Cornelius; but still more certain it is that if at this moment our correspondence with the Marquis de Louvois were discovered, skilful pilot as I am I should not be able to save the frail bark which is to carry the brothers De Witt and their fortunes out of Holland. That correspondence, which would but prove to honest people how dearly I love my country, and what sacrifices I have offered to make for its liberty and glory, would be ruin to us if it fell into the hands of our triumphant foes, the adherents of the Prince of Orange. Therefore I trust that you burned every

letter, dear Cornelius, before you left Dort to join me at the Hague."

"My dear brother," Cornelius answered, "your correspondence with M. de Louvois affords ample proof of your having been of late the greatest, ablest, and noblest citizen of the Seven United Provinces. I love my country's glory, and your fame is dearer to me than all the world, dear John; therefore I have taken good care not to burn that correspondence."

"Then we are lost, as far as this life is concerned," calmly remarked the Ex-Grand Pensionary, approaching the window.

"No, John, you are altogether wrong, and we shall find our bodily safety assured."

"Pray, what have you done with these letters?"

"I have entrusted them to the care of Cornelius van Baerle, my godson, whom you know, and who lives at Dort."

"Oh, the poor fellow! the dear, innocent child! The scholar who knows so many things, and at the same time (and a rare combination it is) thinks only of his flowers who offer their daily greeting to God, and of God himself who makes the flowers grow. So you have entrusted him with that fatal parcel? Alas! dear brother, it will be the ruin of poor Cornelius."

"His ruin?"

"Yes, for he will either be strong or he will be weak. If he is strong (for, little as he may dream of what has happened to us, buried in his studies there at Dort, and incredibly absorbed and distraught as he is, still he will hear of it sooner or later), then, I say, if he is strong of heart, he will boast of his relations with us; and if he is

weak, he will be afraid of the results of having been intimate with us. If he is strong, he will proclaim the secret from the housetops; if he is weak he will allow it to be forced from him. In either case he is lost, and so are we. Let us, therefore, fly at once, if indeed we are not too late."

Cornelius raised himself on his couch, and grasping the hand of his brother, who shuddered at the touch of the linen bandages, replied, —

"Do I not know my godson? Have I not learned to read as in an open book every thought of Van Baerle's brain and every emotion of his soul? You ask whether he is strong or weak. He is neither the one nor the other; but that is not now the question. The principal point is, that he is sure not to divulge the secret, for the very good reason that he does not know it himself."

John turned around in surprise.

"Ah!" continued Cornelius, with his gentle smile, "the Ruart de Pulten has been brought up in the school of his brother John; and I repeat to you, dear brother, that Van Baerle is not aware of the nature and importance of the deposit which I have entrusted to him."

"Quickly, then," cried John, "as there is still time, let us convey to him directions to burn the parcel."

"By whom can we transmit such a direction?"

"By my servant Craeke, who was to have accompanied us on horseback, and who entered the prison with me, to assist you downstairs."

"Consider well before ordering those precious documents burned, John!"

"I consider above all things that the brothers De Witt must necessarily save their lives in order to be able to

save their character. When we are dead, who will defend us? Who will there be who has even so much as understood us?"

"Do you believe, then, that they would kill us if those papers were found?"

John, without answering, pointed with his hand to the square, whence a fresh outburst of fierce shouting arose at that moment.

"Yes, yes," said Cornelius, "I hear these shouts very plainly, but what is their meaning?"

John opened the window.

"Death to the traitors!" howled the populace.

"Do you hear now, Cornelius?"

"'To the traitors!' that means us?" said the prisoner, raising his eyes to heaven, with a shudder.

"Yes, it means us," repeated John.

"Where is Craeke?"

"At the door of your cell, I suppose."

"Pray, let him come in."

John opened the door; the faithful servant was waiting on the threshold.

"Come in, Craeke, and mind well what my brother will tell you."

"No, John; it will not suffice to send a verbal message; unfortunately I shall be obliged to write."

"Why so?"

"Because Van Baerle will neither give up the parcel nor burn it without a special command to do so."

"But will you be able to write, my dear fellow?" John asked, with a compassionate glance at his poor hands all scorched and bruised.

"If I had pen and ink you would soon see," said Cornelius.

"Here is a pencil, at any rate."

"Have you any paper? They have left me nothing."

"Here, take this Bible, and tear out the fly-leaf."

"Very well, that will do."

"But your writing will be illegible."

"Never fear," rejoined Cornelius, glancing at his brother. "These fingers which have resisted the screws of the executioner, and this will of mine which has triumphed over pain, will unite in a common effort; so have no fear that the lines will be disfigured by any tremulousness of my hand."

Cornelius actually took the pencil and began to write, whereupon great drops of blood, forced from his raw wounds by the pressure of his fingers upon the pencil, could be seen oozing out beneath the white linen.

Great drops of sweat stood upon the brow of the Grand Pensionary.

Cornelius wrote, —

August 20, 1672.

My dear Godson, — Burn the parcel which I have entrusted to you. Burn it without looking at it, and without opening it, so that its contents may forever remain unknown to yourself. Secrets of this description are death to those with whom they are deposited. Burn it, and you will have saved the lives of John and Cornelius.

Farewell, and love me.

Cornelius de Witt.

John, with tears in his eyes, wiped off a drop of the noble blood which had soiled the leaf; and having handed the dispatch to Craeke with final directions, returned to Cornelius, from whose face the pain had driven every vestige of color, and who seemed near fainting.

"Now," said he, "when honest Craeke sounds his old boatswain's whistle, it will mean that he is clear of the mob and has reached the other side of the pond. And then it will be our turn to depart."

Five minutes had not elapsed before a long and shrill whistle, blown in true seaman's style, made itself heard through the leafy canopy of the elms and above all the uproar around the Buytenhof.

John raised his clasped hands heavenward in thanksgiving.

"And now," said he, "let us be off, Cornelius."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE PUPIL OF JOHN DE WITT.

WHILE the clamor of the crowd in the square of the Buytenhof, which grew more and more menacing against the two brothers, determined John de Witt to hasten the departure of his brother Cornelius, a deputation of burghers had gone to the Town-hall to demand the withdrawal of Tilly's horse.

It was not far from the Buytenhof to the Hoogstraet; and a stranger, who since the beginning of this scene had watched all its incidents with intense interest, was seen to wend his way with, or rather in the wake of, the others toward the Town-hall, to learn as soon as possible what took place there.

This stranger was a very young man, of some twenty-two or three years, and for aught that appeared without especial vigor. He evidently had reasons for not wishing to be recognized, for he concealed his pale, elongated face in a handkerchief of fine Frisian linen, with which he incessantly wiped his brow or his burning lips.

With an eye as keen as that of a bird of prey, a long aquiline nose, and a finely-cut mouth, which was slightly open and was like a wound across his face, this man would have presented to Lavater, if Lavater had lived at that time, a subject for physiognomical investigations,

the first results of which might not have been very favorable to the stranger.

"What difference can be detected between the features of a conqueror and those of a successful pirate?" the ancients used to ask.

The same difference that there is between the eagle and the vulture, — in the one case a serene and tranquil expression, in the other fear and inquietude.

By the same token, those pallid features and that slender sickly body, which hung upon the skirts of the howling mob from the Buytenhof to the Hoogstraet, were the very type and model of a suspicious employer, or a thief in fear of arrest; and a police-officer would certainly have decided in favor of the latter supposition, on account of the great care with which the person who now occupies our attention sought to conceal his identity.

He was plainly dressed, and apparently unarmed; his thin, wiry arm and his veined hand of aristocratic whiteness and delicacy were resting, not on the arm, but on the shoulder of an officer, who with his hand on his sword watched, with an interest easily understood, the drama that was being enacted around the Buytenhof, until his companion had left the square and compelled him to follow.

On arriving at the square in front of the Hoogstraet, the man with the pale face pushed the other behind an open shutter, and fixed his eyes upon the balcony of the Town-hall.

At the savage yells of the mob, the window of the Hoogstraet opened, and a man came forth to parley with the people.

"Who is that on the balcony?" the young man asked

the officer, indicating by the direction of his glance merely the orator, who seemed much excited, and held himself erect by the help of the balustrade, rather than leaned upon it.

"It is Deputy Bowelt," replied the officer.

"What sort of man is he? Do you know anything of him?"

"An honest man; at least I believe so, Monseigneur."

The young man upon hearing this appreciative estimate of Bowelt's character from his companion showed signs of such strange disappointment and evident dissatisfaction that the officer could not but remark it, and hastened to add, —

"At least people say so, Monseigneur. I cannot say anything about it myself, as I have no personal acquaintance with Mynheer Bowelt."

"An honest man," repeated he who was addressed as Monseigneur; "do you mean to say that he is an honest man (*brave homme*), or a brave one (*homme brave*)?"

"Ah, Monseigneur must excuse me; I would not presume to draw such a fine distinction in the case of a man whom, I assure your Highness once more, I know only by sight."

"Well," the young man muttered, "let us wait, and we shall soon see."

The officer bowed his head in token of assent, and was silent.

"If this Bowelt is an honest man," his Highness continued, "these hotheads will meet with a very queer reception at his hands."

The nervous quiver of his hand, which moved involuntarily on the shoulder of his companion, like the fingers

of a pianist over the keyboard, betrayed his burning impatience, so ill concealed at certain times, and particularly at that moment, under the cold and sombre expression of his face.

The chief of the deputation of the burghers was then heard interrogating the Deputy, whom he requested to let them know where the other deputies, his colleagues, were.

"Gentlemen," Bowelt repeated for the second time, "I assure you that at this moment I am here alone with Mynheer d'Asperen, and I cannot come to any decision on my own responsibility."

"The order! we want the order!" cried several thousand voices.

Mynheer Bowelt undertook to speak; but his words could not be heard, and he was only seen moving his arms in all sorts of despairing gestures. When, at last, he saw that he could not make himself heard, he turned towards the open window, and called Mynheer d'Asperen.

The latter gentleman now made his appearance on the balcony, where he was saluted with shouts even more energetic than those with which Mynheer Bowelt had been received ten minutes before.

This did not prevent him from undertaking the difficult task of haranguing the mob; but the mob preferred to bear down by force all opposition on the part of the States — which, however, offered no resistance to the sovereign people — rather than to listen to the speech of Mynheer d'Asperen.

"Come," the young man coolly remarked, while the crowd was rushing into the principal door of the Hoog-

straet, "it seems that the question will be discussed indoors, Colonel. Come, and let us hear the debate."

"Oh, Monseigneur! Monseigneur! take care!"

"Of what?"

"Among these deputies, there are many who have had dealings with you; and it would be sufficient that only one of them should recognize your Highness."

"Yes, to lay the foundation for the charge that I have been the instigator of all this work; indeed, you are right," said the young man, blushing for a moment from regret of having betrayed so much eagerness. "Yes, you are right; let us remain here. From this place we can see them return with or without the order for the withdrawal of the dragoons, and then we may judge whether Mynheer Bowelt is an honest man or a brave one, which I am anxious to ascertain."

"Why," replied the officer, looking with astonishment at the personage whom he addressed as Monseigneur, "why, your Highness surely does not suppose for one instant that the deputies will order Tilly's horse to quit their post?"

"Why not?" asked the young man, coldly.

"Because to issue such an order would be tantamount to signing the death-warrant of Cornelius and John de Witt."

"We shall see," his Highness replied with the most perfect coolness. "God alone knows what is going on within the hearts of men."

The officer looked askance at the impassible countenance of his companion, and grew pale: *he* was an honest man as well as a brave one.

From the spot where they stood, his Highness and his

attendant heard the tumult and the heavy tramp of the crowd on the staircase of the Town-hall.

Then the noise seemed to fill the whole square, as it came pouring out through the open windows of the hall, on the balcony in front of which Mynheers Bowelt and d'Asperen had appeared ; they had, meanwhile, withdrawn inside the building, fearing doubtless that they might, if they remained on the balcony, be forced over the balustrade into the street by the pressure of the crowd.

After this, confused gesticulating shapes were seen to pass to and fro in front of the windows : the council-hall was filling.

Suddenly the noise subsided ; and as suddenly again it rose with redoubled intensity, and at last reached such a pitch that the old building shook to the very roof.

At length the living stream poured back through the galleries and stairs to the door, and they saw it come rushing out through the arched gateway like water from a spout.

At the head of the first group, a man was flying rather than running, his face hideously distorted with satanic glee : this man was the surgeon Tyckelaer.

"We have it ! we have it ! " he cried, brandishing a paper in the air.

"They have the order ! " muttered the officer, in amazement.

"Well, then," his Highness quietly remarked, "now my mind is relieved. You could not tell me, my dear Colonel, whether Mynheer Bowelt was an honest or a brave man ; now I know that he is neither."

Then, gazing steadily after the crowd, which was rushing along before him, he continued, —

"Let us now go to the Buytenhof, Colonel; I expect we shall see a very strange sight there."

The officer bowed, and without making any reply, followed in the steps of his master.

There was an immense crowd in the square and about the approaches to the prison; but the dragoons of Tilly still held it in check as effectively and unflinchingly as before.

It was not long before the Count heard the increasing din of the approaching multitude, and soon he spied the advanced guard rushing on with the rapidity of a cataract.

At the same time, he observed the paper, which was waving in the air above the clenched fists and glittering weapons.

"Aha!" he exclaimed, rising in his stirrups and touching his lieutenant with the hilt of his sword, "I really believe these rascals have got the order."

"What dastardly ruffians they are!" cried the lieutenant.

It was indeed the order, which the burgher-guard received with a roar of triumph. They immediately left their position and advanced, with lowered arms and fierce shouts, toward Count Tilly's dragoons.

But the Count was not the man to allow them to approach inconveniently near.

"Halt!" he cried, "halt, and keep back from my horses' heads, or I give the word to advance."

"Here is the order," a hundred insolent voices answered at once.

He took it in amazement, cast his eyes rapidly over it, and said aloud, —

"The men who signed this order are the real murderers of Cornelius de Witt. I would rather have my two hands cut off than have written one single letter of this infamous order."

Pushing back with the hilt of his sword the man who wanted to take it from him, he added, —

"One moment; papers like this are of importance, and should be preserved."

Saying this, he folded up the document, and carefully put it in the pocket of his doublet.

Then, turning round toward his troop, he gave the word of command, —

"Dragoons, attention! Right wheel!"

He added in an undertone, yet loud enough for his words to be not altogether lost to those about him, —

"And now, butchers, do your work!"

A savage yell, which voiced all the keen hatred and ferocious triumph which were rife in that prison square, welcomed with a fresh outburst of jeering and yelling the departure of the troops as they quietly filed away.

The Count tarried behind, facing to the last the infuriated populace, who followed, inch by inch, upon his horse's retreating steps.

John de Witt, as may be seen, had by no means exaggerated the danger, when he assisted his brother to rise and tried to hasten his departure.

Cornelius, leaning on the arm of the Ex-Grand Pensionary, descended the stairs which led to the courtyard. At the bottom of the staircase he found the fair Rosa trembling like a leaf.

"Oh, Mynheer John!" she exclaimed, "what a misfortune!"

"What is it, my child?" asked De Witt.

"Why, they say that they are gone to the Hoogstraet to obtain an order for Tilly's horse to withdraw."

"It cannot be," replied John. "Indeed, my dear child, if the dragoons are withdrawn, we shall be in a very sad plight."

"I have some advice to give you," Rosa said, trembling even more violently than before.

"Well, let us hear what you have to say, my child. Why should I be surprised if God speaks to me through you?"

"Well, then, Mynheer John, if I were in your place, I should not go out through the main street."

"Why so, as the dragoons of Tilly are still at their post?"

"Very true; but their orders, so long as they are not revoked, enjoin them to stop before the prison."

"Undoubtedly."

"Have you an order for them to accompany you out of the town?"

"We have not."

"Well, then, as soon as you have passed the ranks of the dragoons, you will fall into the hands of the people."

"But the burgher-guard?"

"Alas! the burgher-guard are the most hot-headed and furious of all."

"What are we to do, then?"

"If I were in your place, Mynheer John," the young girl timidly continued, "I should go out by the postern. It opens upon a by-street, which will be quite deserted, for everybody is waiting in the High-street to see you come out by the principal entrance. Thence I should

try to reach the gate by which you intend to leave the town."

"But my brother is not able to walk," said John.

"I will try," Cornelius said, with an expression of most sublime fortitude.

"But have you not your carriage?" asked the girl.

"The carriage is waiting near the main entrance."

"Not so," she replied. "I considered your coachman to be a faithful man, and I told him to wait for you at the postern."

The brothers looked at one another with much emotion, and then their united gaze rested upon the young girl with an expression that told of their heartfelt gratitude.

"The question is now," said the Grand Pensionary, "whether Gryphus will open this door for us."

"Indeed he will do no such thing," said Rosa.

"Then what are we to do, pray?"

"I foresaw a refusal on his part, and just now, while he was talking from the window of the porter's lodge with a dragoon, I took away the key from his bunch."

"And you have got it?"

"Here it is, Mynheer John."

"My child," said Cornelius, "I have nothing to give you in exchange for the service you are rendering us but the Bible which you will find in my room. It is the last gift of an honest man; I hope it will bring you good luck."

"I thank you, Mynheer Cornelius; it shall never leave me," replied Rosa.

"Alas! what a pity it is that I do not know how to read," she said to herself with a sigh.

"The shouts and cries are growing louder and louder,' said John; "there is not a moment to be lost."

"Come this way," said the maiden, who now led the two brothers through an inner lobby to the back of the prison. Guided by her, they descended a staircase of about a dozen steps, traversed a small courtyard, which was surrounded by strong walls, and the arched door having been opened for them by Rosa, they found themselves outside the prison in a lonely street, where their carriage was waiting for them with the steps lowered.

"Quick, quick, my masters; do you hear them?" cried the coachman, in a deadly fright.

But after having made Cornelius get into the carriage first, the Grand Pensionary turned towards the blushing girl, to whom he said, —

"Good-by, my child. All the words in the world would but weakly express our gratitude; but we will commend you to God, who will remember, I trust, that you have saved the lives of two of his creatures."

Rosa took the hand which John de Witt held out to her, and kissed it with every show of respect.

"Go! for Heaven's sake, go!" she said; "it seems as if they were forcing the door."

John hastily got in, seated himself by the side of his brother, and called out to the coachman, as he drew the curtains close, —

"To the Tol-Hek!"

The Tol-Hek was the iron gate leading to the harbor of Schevening, in which a small vessel was waiting for the two brothers.

The carriage drove off with the fugitives at the full speed of a pair of spirited Flemish horses. Rosa followed

them with her eyes, until they turned the corner of the street; whereupon she re-entered the prison, closing the postern behind her, and threw the key into a well.

The noise which had led Rosa to suppose that the people were forcing the prison door was caused by the mob, who had made a tremendous onslaught upon it as soon as the square was evacuated by the troops.

Solid as the door was, and although Gryphus, to do him justice, stoutly refused to open it, yet it was evident that it could not long hold out against such an assault; and Gryphus, pale as death, was just asking himself whether it would not be better to open it than to let it be broken in pieces, when he felt some one gently pulling his coat.

He turned round and saw Rosa.

"Do you hear these madmen?" he said.

"I hear them so well, my father, that if I were in your place —"

"You would open the door?"

"No, I should let them get in as best they can."

"But they will kill me!"

"Yes, if they see you."

"How do you propose that I should avoid being seen?"

"Hide yourself."

"Where, pray?"

"In the secret dungeon."

"But you, my child?"

"I will go with you, Father. We will lock the door, and when they have left the prison, we can come out from our hiding-place."

"By my soul, it's a good plan!" cried Gryphus;

"it's surprising how much sense there is in this little head!"

Then, as the gate began to give way amid the triumphant shouts of the mob, she opened a little trap-door, and said, —

"Come, Father, hurry."

"But meanwhile what will become of our prisoners?"

"God will watch over them," said the maiden, "while I watch over you."

Gryphus followed his daughter, and the trap-door closed over his head just as the door fell in, and gave admittance to the populace.

The dungeon where Rosa had induced her father to hide himself, which was known as the secret dungeon, and where for the present we must leave the two, afforded them a perfectly safe retreat, being known only to the authorities, who used sometimes to confine important prisoners of state there, to guard against a rescue or an uprising.

The people rushed into the prison, with the cry of, —

"Death to the Traitors! To the gallows with Cornelius de Witt! Death! death!"

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MURDERERS.

THE young man, with his hat still drawn over his eyes, still leaning on the arm of the officer, and still wiping his brow and his lips with his handkerchief from time to time, standing motionless in a corner of the square of the Buytenhof, and sheltered from observation by the overhanging shutters of a closed shop, was intent upon the spectacle afforded by the antics of the infuriated mob, — a spectacle which seemed to draw near its catastrophe.

"Indeed," said he to the officer, "I believe you were right, Van Deken, — the order which the deputies have signed is really the death-warrant of Mynheer Cornelius. Do you hear these people? They certainly have a most bitter enmity against the De Witts."

"In truth," replied the officer, "I never heard such yelling."

"They must have found out our man's cell. Look, look! is not that the window of the cell where Cornelius was confined?"

A man had seized with both hands and was violently shaking the iron bars of the window in the room which Cornelius had left only ten minutes before.

"Hallo, there," shrieked the man; "he is not here!"

"How is that, — not there?" those of the mob who had

been the last to arrive called from the street, being unable to force their way into the prison, so crowded was it.

"No, no," repeated the man in a rage; "he must have made his escape."

"What does the fellow say?" asked his Highness, growing quite pale.

"Oh, Monseigneur, he says something which would be very fortunate if it should turn out true!"

"Certainly, it would be fortunate if it were true," said the young man. "Unfortunately it cannot be true."

"But look!" said the officer.

And indeed, other faces, furious and contorted with rage, showed themselves at the windows, crying, —

"Escaped! gone! they have been assisted to escape."

And the people in the street repeated with fearful imprecations, —

"Escaped! gone! Let us run after them, and hunt them down!"

"Monseigneur, it would seem that Mynheer Cornelius has really escaped," said the officer.

"Yes, from prison, perhaps," replied the other, "but not from the town. You will see, Van Deken, that the poor fellow will find the gate closed against him which he hoped to find open."

"Has any order been given to close the town gates, Monseigneur?"

"No, — at least I do not think so; who could have given such an order?"

"Who, indeed! What leads your Highness to think so?"

"There are such things as fatalities," his Highness

replied, in an off-hand manner; "and the greatest men have sometimes fallen victims to them."

At these words the officer felt his blood run cold, for he felt sure that in one way or another the fugitive's fate was sealed.

At this moment the roar of the multitude broke forth like thunder, for they had become quite certain that Cornelius de Witt was no longer in the prison.

Cornelius and John had driven along by the edge of the pond and taken the main street which leads to the Tol-Hek, giving directions to the coachman to slacken his pace, in order that no suspicion might be aroused by the rapid pace at which they were driving.

But when he had gone so far that he could see the gate in the distance, and reflected that he was leaving imprisonment and death behind while life and liberty lay before him, the coachman neglected every precaution, and urged his horses to a gallop.

All at once he stopped.

"What is the matter?" asked John, putting his head out of the coach-window.

"Oh, my masters!" cried the coachman, "the —"

The honest fellow's terror was so great that he could not speak.

"Well, go on; what is it?" urged the Grand Pensionary.

"Alas! the gate is closed."

"What! the gate closed? It is not usual to close the gate during the day."

"But look!"

John de Witt leaned out of the window, and saw that the gate was indeed closed.

"Never mind, but drive on," said John; "I have with me the order for the commutation of the punishment, and the gatekeeper will let us pass."

The carriage resumed its journey, but it was evident that the driver was no longer urging his horses as confidently as before.

Moreover, when John de Witt put his head out of the carriage-window, he was seen and recognized by a brewer, who, being behind his companions, was just putting up his shutters in all haste to join them at the Buytenhof. He uttered a cry of surprise, and ran after two other men, who were hurrying along before him. He overtook them about a hundred yards farther on, and told them what he had seen. The three men then stopped, looking after the carriage, being, however, not yet quite sure whom it contained.

The carriage in the meanwhile arrived at the Tol-Hek.

"Open!" cried the coachman.

"Open!" echoed the gatekeeper, from the threshold of his lodge; "it 's all very well to say, 'Open,' but what am I to do it with?"

"With the key, to be sure," said the coachman.

"With the key? Oh, yes! but in order to do that one must have it."

"What! Do you mean to say that you have not the key of this gate?" demanded the coachman.

"No, I have n't it!"

"What has become of it?"

"Why, they have taken it from me."

"Who?"

"Some one, probably, who had a mind that no one should leave the town."

"My good man," said the Grand Pensionary, putting out his head from the window, and risking all to save all; "my good man, it is for me, John de Witt, and my brother Cornelius, whom I am taking away into exile."

"Oh, Mynheer de Witt! I am indeed grieved beyond measure," said the gatekeeper, rushing towards the carriage; "but upon my honor, the key has been taken from me."

"When, pray?"

"This morning."

"By whom?"

"By a pale, thin young man of about twenty-two."

"Why did you give it up to him?"

"Because he showed me an order, signed and sealed."

"By whom?"

"By the gentlemen at the Town-hall."

"In that event," said Cornelius, calmly, "our doom seems to be sealed."

"Do you know whether the same precaution has been taken at all the other gates?"

"I do not."

"Come," said John to the coachman, "God enjoins upon man to do all that is in his power to preserve his life; drive to another gate."

Then while the servant was turning his horses, John said to the gatekeeper, —

"Thanks for your good intentions, my good friend; the will must count for the deed. You had the will to save us, and in the eyes of the Lord, it is as if you had succeeded."

"Alas!" said the gatekeeper, "do you see what is going on down there?"

"Drive at a gallop through that group," John called out to the coachman, "and take the street to the left; it is our only hope."

The group which John alluded to had for its nucleus those three men whom we left looking after the carriage, and who since that time, while John was talking with the gatekeeper, had been joined by seven or eight others.

These new-comers were evidently meditating mischief with regard to the carriage.

When they saw the horses galloping down upon them, they placed themselves across the street, brandishing cudgels in their hands, and calling out, —

"Stop! stop!"

The coachman, however, leaned toward them, and lashed them furiously with his whip.

At last the carriage and its would-be wreckers came together.

The brothers De Witt could see nothing, being closely shut up in the carriage. But they could feel the rearing of the horses, followed by a violent shock. There was a moment of suspense, while the vehicle seemed to shake in every part; but it almost immediately set off again, passing over something round and elastic, which seemed to be the body of a prostrate man, and whirled away amid a volley of the fiercest oaths.

"Alas!" said Cornelius, "I am afraid we have hurt some one."

"Faster! faster!" cried John.

But notwithstanding this order the carriage suddenly came to a standstill.

"Well! what now?" asked John.

"Look there!" said the coachman.

John looked.

The whole mass of the populace from the Buytenhof appeared at the end of the street through which the carriage was passing, and came roaring on as if driven by a cyclone.

"Stop, and save yourself," said John to the coachman; "it is useless to go any farther, — we are lost!"

"Here they are! here they are!" five hundred voices were crying at the same time.

"Yes, here they are, the traitors, the murderers, the assassins!" answered the men who were running after the carriage to the people who were coming to meet it. The former carried in their arms the lifeless body of one of their companions, who had been trodden down by the horses while trying to seize their heads.

His body was the object over which the two brothers had felt their carriage pass.

The coachman stopped his horses, but notwithstanding his master's entreaties he refused to make his escape.

In an instant the carriage was surrounded by those who followed and those who were coming toward it.

For an instant it rose above the mass of moving heads like a floating island.

But suddenly the floating island came to a standstill. A blacksmith with his hammer struck down one of the horses, who fell in his traces.

At this moment, the shutter of a window opened, and disclosed the pale face and gloomy eyes of the young man, who watched the approaching catastrophe with most absorbed interest.

Behind him appeared the face of the officer, almost as pale as his own.

"Good heavens, Monseigneur, what is going to happen?" whispered the officer.

"Something very terrible, to a certainty," replied the other.

"Oh, see, Monseigneur! they are dragging the Grand Pensionary from the carriage; they strike him; they tear him to pieces!"

"Indeed, these people must certainly be moved by most intense hatred," said the young man, with the same impassible tone which he had maintained throughout.

"And now they are dragging out Cornelius, — Cornelius, who is already all torn and mangled by the torture. Oh, look, look, for God's sake!"

"Indeed, it is Cornelius beyond doubt."

The officer uttered a feeble cry, and turned his head away.

What had happened was that the Ruart de Pulten, while he was yet on the lowest step of the carriage, and before he had set foot on the ground, received a blow from an iron bar, which broke his skull. He rose once more, but immediately fell again.

Some fellows then seized him by the feet and dragged him into the crowd, into the midst of which one might have followed him by the trail of blood he left behind him; and the infuriated rabble closed in upon him with savage yells of malignant exultation.

The young man — a thing which would have been thought impossible — grew even paler than before, and his eyes were for a moment veiled behind the lids.

The officer saw this sign of compassion, the first that his companion had allowed to escape him, and wishing to avail himself of his softer mood —

"Come, come, Monseigneur," he exclaimed, "for here they are also going to murder the Grand Pensionary."

But the young man had already opened his eyes again.

"So they are!" he said. "The people are implacable. It does not pay to offend them."

"Monseigneur," said the officer, "could we not save this poor man, who has been your Highness's tutor? If there be any way, tell me, and though I should perish in the attempt —"

William of Orange — for he it was — frowned sternly; but restraining the gleam of bitter malice which glistened in his half-closed eye, he answered, —

"Colonel van Deken, go, I beg you, and see that my troops are under arms, and ready for any emergency."

"But am I to leave Monseigneur here, alone, within reach of all these murderers?"

"Pray don't worry about my welfare more than I do myself," was the Prince's gruff rejoinder. "Go!"

The officer started off with a speed which was much less owing to his military instinct of obedience than to his pleasure at being relieved from the necessity of witnessing the shocking spectacle of the murder of the other brother.

He had scarcely left the room, when John — who, with an almost superhuman effort, had reached the stone steps of a house nearly opposite that where his former pupil was hiding — began to stagger under the blows which were inflicted on him from all sides, calling out, —

"My brother — where is my brother?"

One of the ruffians knocked off his hat with a blow of his clenched fist.

Another waved his bloody hands in his face: this wor-

thy had disembowelled Cornelius, and was now intent upon seizing the opportunity of serving the Grand Pensionary in the same manner, while they were dragging the dead body of Cornelius to the gibbet.

John uttered a piteous cry, and put one of his hands before his eyes.

"Oh! you close your eyes, do you?" said one of the soldiers of the burgher-guard; "well, I will save you the trouble by putting them out for you."

He suited the action to the word by stabbing him with his pike in the face, whereupon the blood spurted forth.

"My brother!" cried John de Witt, trying to see, through the stream of blood which blinded him, what had become of Cornelius; "my brother, my brother!"

"Go, and join him!" roared another of the assassins, putting his musket to his temple and pulling the trigger.

But it missed fire.

The fellow then shifted his musket, and taking it by the barrel with both hands, struck down John de Witt with the stock.

John staggered and fell at his feet; but once more he raised himself with a last effort, and cried, —

"My brother!" in so heartrending a tone that the young man opposite closed the shutter.

However, there was little more to see, for a third assassin held a pistol close to his face and fired it. This time the weapon did not miss fire, and the bullet blew out his brains.

John de Witt fell to rise no more.

Thereupon every one of the miscreants, emboldened by his fall, must needs fire his gun at him, or strike him with the sledge-hammer, or stab him with knife or sword;

every one must needs drain a drop of blood from the fallen hero, and tear off a shred of his garments.

Then, after they had mangled and torn and completely stripped the two brothers, the mob dragged their naked and bloody bodies to an extemporized gibbet, where amateur executioners hung them up by the feet.

Then came the most dastardly scoundrels of all, who had not dared approach them when alive, but cut the dead flesh in pieces, and then went about in the town selling small slices of the bodies of John and Cornelius at ten sous a piece.

We cannot take upon ourselves to say whether, through the almost imperceptible chink of the shutter, the young man witnessed the conclusion of this shocking scene; but at the very moment when they were hanging the two martyrs on the gibbet, he made his way through the mob, which was too much absorbed in its congenial task to take any notice of him, and reached the Tol-Hek, which was still closed.

"Ah, Mynheer," cried the gatekeeper, "have you brought back the key?"

"Yes, my man, here it is."

"Alas! it is most unfortunate that you did not bring it to me just a quarter of an hour sooner," said the gatekeeper, with a sigh.

"Why so?" asked the Prince.

"Because I might then have opened the gate for the brothers De Witt; whereas, finding it locked, they were obliged to retrace their steps, and they have fallen into the hands of the ruffians who were pursuing them."

"Gate! gate!" cried a voice, which sounded as if its owner were in a tremendous hurry.

The Prince turned and recognized Colonel van Deken.

"Is that you, Colonel?" he said. "Have you not left the Hague yet? This is executing my orders very slowly."

"Monseigneur," replied the Colonel, "this is the third gate at which I have presented myself; the two others were closed."

"Well, this good man will open this one for us. — Open, my friend," said the Prince to the gatekeeper, who stood gaping with astonishment on hearing the title of Monseigneur which Colonel van Deken bestowed upon this pale young man, to whom he himself had been speaking in such a familiar way.

As if to make up for his fault, he hastened to open the Tol-Hek, which swung creaking on its hinges.

"Will Monseigneur take my horse?" asked the Colonel.

"Thanks, Colonel, but I should have a mount waiting for me close at hand."

And taking from his pocket a golden whistle, such as was generally used at that time for summoning one's servants, he blew a long shrill blast upon it, whereupon an equerry on horseback speedily made his appearance, leading another horse by the bridle.

William, without touching the stirrup, vaulted into the saddle of the led horse, and, spurring vigorously, set off toward the Leyden road.

At that point he turned. The Colonel was following him within a horse's length. The Prince motioned him to ride beside him.

"Do you know," he then said, without drawing rein, "that those rascals have killed John de Witt as well as his brother?"

"Alas, Monseigneur!" the Colonel answered sadly, "I should like it much better if these two obstacles still existed between yourself and the actual Stadtholderate of Holland."

"Certainly, it would have been better," said William, "if what did happen had not happened. But it cannot be helped now, and we have had nothing to do with it. Let us push on, Colonel, so that we may arrive at Alphen before the message which the States are sure to send to me in camp."

The Colonel bowed, allowed the Prince to ride ahead, and fell back to the same position he occupied before the Prince addressed him.

"Ah!" muttered William of Orange, with an evil frown, clenching his teeth and driving his spurs into his horse's side; "ah! I should like well to see the expression on the face of Louis, the Sun of the World, when he learns what has befallen his trusty friends, the De Witts! Oh, thou Sun! thou Sun! as surely as I am called William the Taciturn, thou Sun, thou hadst best look to thy radiance!"

And away upon his mettled steed sped this young Prince, the relentless rival of the great king; this Stadtholder in embryo, who had been, but the day before, very uncertainly established in his new-born power, but for whom the burghers of the Hague had built a staircase with the bodies of John and Cornelius, two princes as noble as he in the eyes of God and man.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE TULIP-FANCIER AND HIS NEIGHBOR.

WHILE the burghers of the Hague were tearing in pieces the bodies of John and Cornelius de Witt, and while William of Orange, after having made sure that his two antagonists were really dead, was galloping along the Leyden road, followed by Colonel van Deken, whom he found a little too compassionate to honor him any longer with his confidence, Craeke, the faithful servant, mounted on a good horse, and little suspecting what terrible events had taken place since his departure, rode along the tree-lined embankments until he was clear of the town and the neighboring villages.

Being once safe, he left his horse at a livery stable, in order not to arouse suspicion, and tranquilly continued his journey on the canal-boats, which conveyed him by easy stages to Dort, making their way under skilful guidance by the shortest possible routes through the windings of the stream, which held in its watery embrace so many fascinating little islands, edged with willows and rushes and abounding in luxuriant vegetation, whereon flocks of fat sheep were browsing sleepily and peacefully.

Craeke from afar recognized Dort, the smiling city, at the foot of a hill dotted with windmills. He saw the fine red-brick houses, mortared in white lines, bathing their feet in the water, and their balconies, open toward the

river, decked out with silk tapestry embroidered with gold flowers, the wonderful fabrics of India and China; and near these brilliant stuffs, long lines set permanently to catch the greedy eels, which are attracted toward the houses by the garbage thrown every day from the kitchen windows into the river.

Craeke, standing on the deck of the boat, saw, across the moving sails of the windmills, on the slope of the hill, the red and white house which was his goal. The outlines of its roof were hidden by the yellow foliage of a screen of poplar trees, the whole building having for background a dark grove of gigantic elms. It was so situated that the sun's rays were concentrated upon it, and made dry and warm and even wholesome the mist, which the barrier of trees could not prevent the wind bringing thither from the river every morning and evening.

Having disembarked unobserved amid the usual bustle of the city, Craeke at once directed his steps toward the house we have just described, and of which we offer our readers a description, which is indispensable.

White, trim, and tidy, even more cleanly scoured and more carefully waxed in the hidden corners than in the places which were exposed to view, this house gave shelter to a truly happy mortal.

This happy mortal, *rara avis*, as Juvenal has it, was Dr. van Baerle, the godson of Cornelius de Witt. He had inhabited the house we have described ever since his childhood; for it was the house in which his father and grandfather, old-time noble merchants of the noble city of Dort, were born.

Mynheer van Baerle, the father, had amassed in the Indian trade three or four hundred thousand florins, which Mynheer van Baerle, the son, at the death of his loving and cherished parents, in 1688, found still quite new, although one set of them bore the date of 1640, and the other that of 1610, — a fact which proved that they were the florins of Van Baerle the father and of Van Baerle the grandfather; but we hasten to say that these three or four hundred thousand florins were only pocket-money for Cornelius van Baerle, the hero of this story, as his landed property in the province yielded him an income of about ten thousand florins a year.

When the worthy citizen, Cornelius's father, shuffled off this mortal coil three months after the decease of his wife, who seemed to have gone first to lighten his path in death as she had lightened his journey through life, he said to his son, as he embraced him for the last time, —

"Eat, drink, and spend your money, if you wish to know what life really is; for as to toiling from morn to evening on a wooden stool or in a leathern chair, in a counting-house or a laboratory, that certainly is not living. Your turn to die will come; and if you are not then so fortunate as to have a son, you will let our name die out, and my astonished florins, which no one has ever weighed but my father, myself, and the coiner, will find themselves the property of an unknown master. Above all things, do not imitate the example of your godfather, Cornelius de Witt, who has plunged into politics, the most ungrateful of all careers, and who will certainly come to an untimely end."

And so worthy Mynheer van Baerle died, to the intense

grief of his son Cornelius, who cared very little for the florins and very much for his father.

Cornelius thereafter remained alone in his great house.

In vain his godfather offered him a place in the public service; in vain did he try to arouse in him a thirst for glory, — although Cornelius, to gratify his godfather, did embark with De Ruyter upon "The Seven Provinces," the flagship of a fleet of one hundred and thirty-nine sail, with which the famous admiral set out to contend single-handed against the combined forces of France and England. When, guided by the pilot Léger, he had come within musket-shot of the "Prince," with the Duke of York (the English king's brother) aboard, upon which De Ruyter, his Mentor, made so sharp and well-directed an attack that the Duke, perceiving that his vessel would soon have to strike, made the best of his way aboard the "Saint Michael;" when he had seen the "Saint Michael," riddled and shattered by the Dutch broadside, drift out of the line; when he had witnessed the sinking of the "Earl of Sandwich," and the death by fire or drowning of four hundred sailors; when he realized that the result of all this destruction — after twenty ships had been blown to pieces, three thousand men killed and five thousand injured — was that nothing was decided, that both sides claimed the victory, that the fighting would soon begin again, and that just one more name, that of Southwold Bay, had been added to the list of battles; when he had estimated how much time is lost simply in shutting his eyes and ears by a man who likes to use his reflective powers even while his fellow-creatures are cannonading one another, — Cornelius bade farewell to De Ruyter, to

the Ruart de Pulten, and to glory; kissed the knees of the Grand Pensionary, for whom he entertained the deepest veneration, and retired to his house at Dort, rich in his well-earned repose, his twenty-eight years, an iron constitution, and keen perceptions, and his capital of more than four hundred thousands of florins, and income of ten thousand, convinced that a man is always endowed by Heaven with too much for his own happiness, and just enough to make him miserable.

Consequently, and to indulge his own idea of happiness, Cornelius began to be interested in the study of plants and insects; collected and classified all the Flora of the islands, arranged the whole entomology of the province, on which he wrote a treatise, with plates drawn by his own hands; and at last, being at a loss what to do with his time, and especially with his money, which went on accumulating at a most alarming rate, he took it into his head to choose among all the fads of his country and of his age one of the most elegant and expensive.

He became a tulip-fancier.

It was the time, as is well known, when the Dutch and the Portuguese, rivalling each other in this branch of horticulture, had begun to deify the tulip, and to make more of a cult of it than ever naturalists dared to make of the human race, for fear of arousing the jealousy of the Deity.

Soon from Dort to Mons people talked of nothing but Mynheer van Baerle's tulips; and his beds, pits, drying-rooms, and drawers of bulbs were visited, as the galleries and libraries of Alexandria were in the olden days by illustrious Roman travellers.

Van Baerle began by expending his yearly revenue in laying the ground-work of his collection, after which he encroached upon his store of new florins to bring it to perfection. His exertions, indeed, were crowned with most magnificent results: he produced five new species of tulips, which he called the "Jane," after his mother; the "Van Baerle," after his father; and the "Cornelius," after his godfather: the other names have escaped us, but amateurs will be sure to find them in the catalogues of the time.

In the beginning of the year 1672, Cornelius de Witt came to Dort for three months, to live at his old family mansion; for it is known not only that he was born in that city, but that the De Witt family had its origin there.

Cornelius at that period, in the words of William of Orange, was beginning to enjoy the most perfect unpopularity. And yet in the minds of his fellow-citizens the good burghers of Dort, he was not lost beyond redemption; and while they did not particularly like his somewhat too pronounced republicanism, they were proud of his personal worth, and when he visited their town they hastened to offer him the loving-cup.

After he had expressed his thanks to his fellow-citizens, Cornelius proceeded to his old family mansion, and gave directions for some repairs, which he wished to have made before the arrival of his wife and children.

Thence the Ruart de Pulten directed his steps toward the house of his godson, who, perhaps, was the only person in Dort as yet unacquainted with the presence of Cornelius in his native town.

In the same degree as Cornelius de Witt had excited

hatred by sowing those evil seeds which are called political passions, Van Baerle had won the good-will of his fellow-citizens by completely neglecting the cultivation of politics in his absorption in tulip-culture.

Van Baerle was truly beloved by his servants and laborers; therefore he could not conceive that any man on earth could wish ill to another.

And yet it must be said, to the discredit of humanity, that Cornelius van Baerle, without knowing it, had a much more ferocious, fierce, and implacable enemy than the Grand Pensionary and his brother had up to that time been made aware of among those members of the Orange faction who were most hostile to the devoted brothers, who had never been sundered by the least misunderstanding during their lives, and by their mutual devotion in the face of death made sure the existence of their more than brotherly affection beyond the grave.

From the time when Cornelius van Baerle began to devote himself to tulip-growing, he had spent on this hobby his yearly revenue and the florins of his father. There was at Dort, living next door to him, a citizen of the name of Isaac Boxtel, who from the day that he had begun to think for himself had indulged the same fancy, and would almost faint at the mere mention of the word "tulban," which (as we are assured by the "Floriste Française," the most highly-considered authority in matters relating to this flower) is the first word in the Cingalese tongue which was ever used to designate that masterpiece of floriculture which is now called the tulip.

Boxtel had not the good fortune of being rich like Van Baerle. He had, therefore, with great care and patience,

and by dint of strenuous exertions, laid out near his house at Dort a garden fit for the culture of his cherished flower; he had mixed the soil according to the most approved directions, and given to his hotbeds just as much heat and fresh air as the strictest rules of horticulture exact.

Isaac knew the temperature of his frames to the twentieth part of a degree. He knew the strength of the current of air, and managed the draught so that it would not impart too violent a motion to the stems of his flowers. His specimens soon began to meet with favor. They were beautiful, and sought after, too. Several fanciers had come to see Boxtel's tulips. At last he brought forth amid all the Linnæuses and Tourneforts a tulip which bore his name, and which, after having travelled all through France, had found its way into Spain, and penetrated as far as Portugal, where King Don Alphonso VI., — who when driven from Lisbon had retired to the Island of Terceira, where he amused himself, not like the Great Condé, with watering his carnations, but with growing tulips, — on seeing the "Boxtel," remarked that it was "NOT BAD."

All at once Cornelius Van Baerle, who after all his learned pursuits had been seized with the tulipomania, made some changes in his house at Dort, which, as we have stated, was next door to that of Boxtel. He added one story to a certain building in his courtyard, which took away about half a degree of warmth from Boxtel's garden, and in exchange returned half a degree of cold; not to mention that it interfered with the draught, and upset all the horticultural calculations and arrangements of his neighbor.

After all, this mishap appeared to Boxtel of no great consequence. Van Baerle was but a painter; that is to say, a species of lunatic, who distorts and disfigures Nature's wonders by trying to reproduce them on canvas. The painter, he thought, had raised his studio one story to get better light, as he had a perfect right to do. Mynheer van Baerle was a painter, as Mynheer Boxtel was a tulip-grower; he wanted somewhat more sun for his paintings, and so he took half a degree from his neighbor's tulips.

The law was with Van Baerle, and he must make the best of it.

Moreover Isaac made the discovery that too much sun was injurious to tulips, and that this flower grew more quickly and assumed more gorgeous hues with the temperate warmth of morning and evening than with the powerful heat of the midday sun. He therefore felt almost grateful to Cornelius van Baerle for having furnished him with a sunshade at no expense.

It may be that this was not entirely true, and that Boxtel's real feelings were not accurately reflected in what he said about his neighbor; but great minds find a marvellous amount of comfort in philosophical reflections, even in the midst of most terrible calamities.

But, alas! what was the agony of the unfortunate Boxtel on seeing the windows of the newly-built story set out with bulbs and seedlings, with tulips in full bloom, and tulips in pots; in short, with everything dear to the heart of a monomaniac in tulips.

There were bundles of labels, pigeon-holes, and drawers with compartments, and wire-guards for the pigeon-holes, to allow free access to the air while keeping out mice,

weevils, field-mice, dormice, and rats, all of them very inquisitive and expensive amateurs in tulips at two thousand francs a bulb.

Boxtel was amazed when he saw all this apparatus, but he was not as yet aware of the full extent of his misfortune. Van Baerle was known to be fond of everything that pleases the eye. He studied Nature in all her aspects for the benefit of his paintings, which were as carefully finished in detail as those of Gerard Dow, his master, and of Miéris, his friend. Was it not possible, that, having to paint the interior of a tulip-grower's, he had collected in his new studio all the accessories of its decoration?

Yet although somewhat comforted by this illusory supposition, Boxtel was not able to resist the burning curiosity which was devouring him. In the evening, therefore, he placed a ladder against the partition-wall between their gardens, and looking into that of his neighbor Van Baerle, he convinced himself that the soil of a large square bed, which had formerly been occupied by different plants, had been dug up and rearranged in beds of loam mixed with river mud (a combination which is particularly favorable to the tulip), and the whole surrounded by a border of turf to keep the soil in its place. Besides this, the bed was so arranged as to receive the rays of the rising and setting sun, while sufficiently shaded to temper the noon-day heat; water in abundant supply was close at hand, and it had a southwest exposure. In short, nothing was lacking to insure not only success but real advancement. There could be no doubt that Van Baerle had become a tulip-grower.

Boxtel at once pictured to himself this learned man,

with a capital of four hundred thousand and a yearly income of ten thousand florins, devoting all his intellectual and financial resources to tulip-culture on a vast scale. He foresaw his neighbor's success vaguely but near at hand; and he felt such a pang at the mere idea of this success that his hands dropped powerless at his side, his knees trembled, and in his despair he fell headlong from the ladder.

Thus it was not for the sake of painted tulips but for real ones that Van Baerle took from him half a degree of warmth. Thus Van Baerle was to have the most admirable exposure to wind and sun, and, besides, a large chamber in which to preserve his bulbs and seedlings, — a well-lighted, airy, and well-ventilated apartment, — which was an unattainable luxury for Boxtel, who had been obliged to give up for this purpose his bedroom, and, lest the presence of animal organisms might injure his bulbs and seedlings, had taken up his abode in a miserable garret.

Boxtel, then, was to have next door to him a rival and competitor, perhaps a successful one; and this rival, instead of being some unknown obscure gardener, was the godson of Mynheer Cornelius de Witt, — that is to say, a celebrity.

Boxtel, as the reader may see, was not possessed of the spirit of Porus, who, on being conquered by Alexander, consoled himself with the renown of his conqueror.

What would happen if Van Baerle should ever produce a new variety of tulip, and name it the John de Witt, after having named one the Cornelius? It was indeed enough to make one choke with rage.

Thus Boxtel, in his jealous foreboding, became the prophet of his own misfortune, and foresaw what was to happen. And after having made this melancholy discovery, he passed the most wretched night possible to imagine.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HATRED OF A TULIP-FANCIER.

From that moment Boxtel was no longer absorbed in his flowers, but was anxious and afraid. He laid aside the pursuit of a favorite subject, which gives vigor and elevation to the efforts of mind and body alike, and all his thoughts ran only upon the injury which his neighbor was likely to inflict upon him.

Van Baerle, as may easily be imagined, had no sooner begun to apply the keen intellect with which Nature had so bountifully endowed him to his new fancy than he succeeded in growing the finest tulips. Indeed, he succeeded better than any one at Harlem or Leyden — the two towns which can boast the best soil and the most congenial climate — in varying the colors, modifying the shape, and producing new species.

He belonged to that witty, ingenious school, who took for their motto in the seventeenth century the aphorism uttered by one of their number in 1653, — "To despise flowers is to offend God."

From that premise the school of tulip-fanciers, the most exclusive of all schools, worked out the following syllogism in the same year, —

"To despise flowers is to offend God.

"The more beautiful the flower is, the more does one offend God in despising it.

"The tulip is the most beautiful of all flowers.

"Therefore, he who despises the tulip offends God beyond measure."

By such reasoning, it can be seen that the four or five thousand tulip-growers of Holland, France, and Portugal, leaving out those of Ceylon and China and the Indies, might, if so disposed, put the whole world under the ban, and condemn as schismatics and heretics and deserving of death the several hundred millions of mankind whose hopes of salvation were not centred upon the tulip.

We cannot doubt that in such a cause Boxtel, though he was Van Baerle's deadly foe, would have marched under the same banner with him.

Mynheer van Baerle, therefore, was very successful, and his name was in everybody's mouth; so that Boxtel disappeared forever from the list of the notable tulip-growers in Holland, and the fraternity of Dort were now represented by Cornelius van Baerle, the modest and inoffensive savant.

Thus from the most slender branch the grafted scion sends forth its most luxuriant shoots, and the sweet-brier, with its four colorless petals, is but the forerunner of the huge, sweet-smelling rose. Thus, too, have the proudest royal lines sometimes had their origin in the hut of a wood-cutter or the fisherman's cabin.

Engrossed, heart and soul, in his pursuits of sowing, planting, and gathering, Van Baerle, petted by the whole fraternity of tulip-growers in Europe, entertained not the least suspicion that there was at his very door a pretender whose throne he had usurped.

He went on in his career, and consequently in his triumphs; and in the course of two years he covered his beds

with such marvellous productions as no mortal man following in the steps of the Creator, except perhaps Shakspeare and Rubens, has ever equalled.

If the necessity had arisen to find some new representative of a condemned soul omitted by Dante, Boxtel, during this time, would have served excellently as a model. While Cornelius was weeding, manuring, watering his beds; while, kneeling on the turf-border, he analyzed every vein of the flowering tulips, and meditated on the modifications which might be effected by possible new combinations of color, Boxtel, concealed behind a small sycamore, which he had trained at the top of the partition-wall and which he made use of as a screen, watched, with his eyes starting from their sockets and with foaming mouth, every step and every gesture of his neighbor; and whenever he thought he saw him look happy, or descried a smile on his lips, or a gleam of contentment in his eyes, he would pour forth such a volley of maledictions and furious threats that one could hardly conceive how such wrath and envy-laden breath could fail to infect the stalks of the poor flowers, and sow the seeds of decay and death among them.

Before long — such rapid progress does the spirit of evil make, when it has once become master of the human heart — Boxtel was no longer content with watching Van Baerle. He wanted to see his flowers too; he had the feelings of an artist, and the masterpiece of a rival engrossed his interest.

He therefore bought a telescope, which enabled him to watch, as accurately as did the owner himself, every progressive development of the flower, from the moment when in the first year its pale seed-leaf begins to peep

from the ground, to that when after five years it raises on high its proud and graceful stalk, upon which uncertain shades of color appear, and flower-petals at last unfold and reveal the hidden treasures of its calyx.

How often did the miserable jealous wretch, perched on his ladder, perceive in Van Baerle's beds tulips which dazzled him by their beauty and almost choked him with their perfection of form and color!

And then, after the first wave of admiration which he could not resist, he began to be tortured by the pangs of envy, by that fever which preys upon the heart and changes it into a nest of vipers feeding upon one another, — the awful source of unspeakable suffering.

How many times did Boxtel, in the midst of tortures which no pen is able fully to describe, feel tempted to jump down into the garden during the night, to destroy the plants, to tear the bulbs with his teeth, and to sacrifice to his wrath the owner himself, if he should venture to defend his tulips!

But to destroy a tulip was a horrible crime in the eyes of a genuine tulip-fancier; as to killing a man, it would not have mattered so very much.

Yet Van Baerle made such progress in the science, which he seemed to master instinctively, that Boxtel at last was maddened to such a degree as to seriously contemplate throwing stones and sticks into the flower-beds of his neighbor. But when he reflected that the very next morning, Van Baerle, upon discovering his loss, would lay an information; that it would appear that the street was a long way off, and that sticks and stones no longer had a way of falling from the sky in the seventeenth century as they used to do in the time of the

Amalekites; and that the author of the crime, though it was perpetrated in the night, would surely be found out, and that he would not only be punished by law, but also dishonored forever in the eyes of all the tulip-growers of Europe, Boxtel whetted his hatred by stratagem, and resolved to employ a means which would not compromise himself.

He considered a long time, and at last found what he sought.

One evening he tied two cats together by their hind-legs with a string about six feet in length, and threw them from the wall into the midst of that noble, that princely, that royal bed, which contained not only the "Cornelius de Witt," but the "Brabançonne" as well, — milk-white, and purple and pink; the "Marbrée de Rotre," — flax-colored, with brilliant red and incarnadine streaks; the "Merveille de Harlem," the "Colombin Obscur," and the "Colombin Clair Terni."

The terrified animals, falling violently from the top of the wall, rushed across the bed, each in a different direction, until the string by which they were tied together was stretched taut; then however, finding that they could go no farther, they tore back and forth with hideous miaouing, mowing down with their string the flowers among which they were disporting themselves, until, after a furious strife of about a quarter of an hour, they succeeded in breaking the string which bound them together, and vanished.

Boxtel, hidden behind his sycamore, could not see anything on account of the darkness; but the piercing cries of the cats told the whole tale, and his heart, overflowing with gall, was now throbbing with triumphant joy.

Boxtel was so eager to ascertain the extent of the injury, that he remained at his post until morning, to feast his eyes upon the sorry plight in which the two cats had left his neighbor's flower-beds. The mists of the morning chilled his frame, but he did not feel the cold, the hope of revenge keeping his blood at fever heat. The chagrin of his rival was to pay for all the inconvenience which he incurred himself.

With the first rays of the sun the door of the white house opened, and Van Baerle made his appearance, approaching the flower-beds with the smile of a man who has passed the night comfortably in his bed, and has had happy dreams.

All at once he perceived furrows and little mounds of earth on the beds, which only the evening before had been as smooth as a mirror; all at once he perceived that his symmetrical rows of tulips were in complete disorder, like the ranks of a battalion in the midst of which a shell has fallen.

He ran up to them with blanched cheek.

Boxtel trembled with joy. Fifteen or twenty tulips, torn and crushed, were lying about, some of them bent, others completely broken and already withering; the sap was oozing from their wounds. How gladly would Van Baerle have redeemed that precious sap with his own blood!

But, oh! the surprise, oh, the delight of Van Baerle! and, oh, the unspeakable disappointment of Boxtel! Not one of the four tulips which the latter had meant to destroy was injured at all. They raised proudly their noble heads above the corpses of their slain companions. This was enough to console Van Baerle, and enough to

make the assassin burst with rage; and he tore his hair at the sight of the effects of the crime which he had committed, but committed in vain.

Van Baerle, while deploring the misfortune which had befallen him, but which, by the goodness of God, was of far less consequence than it might have been, was utterly at a loss to account for it. On making inquiries, he learned that there had been a terrible amount of noise all night. He found traces of the cats, too, in their foot-marks, and hair left behind on the battle-field; and to guard against a similar outrage in future, he gave orders that henceforth one of the under-gardeners should sleep in the garden, in a box near the flower-beds.

Boxtel heard him give the order, and saw the box put up that very day; and deeming himself lucky in not having been suspected, but more than ever incensed against the successful horticulturist, he awaited a more favorable opportunity.

About this time, the Tulip Society of Harlem offered a prize for the discovery (we dare not say the manufacture) of a large black tulip without a spot of color, a problem which had never been solved, and was considered insoluble; for at that time there was no variety of the tulip species of so dark a shade as bistre even. It was, therefore, generally said that the founders of the prize might just as well have offered two millions as a hundred thousand livres, since the thing was impossible.

The tulip-growing world was none the less excited from centre to circumference. Some fanciers caught at the idea without believing it practicable; but such is the power of imagination among florists, that although considering the undertaking as certain to fail, all their thoughts were

engrossed by the wonderful black tulip, which was supposed to be as chimerical as the black swan of Horace or the white blackbird of French tradition.

Van Baerle was one of the tulip-growers who conceived the idea of trying for the prize, while Boxtel was of the number who looked upon it only as a chimæra. Van Baerle, as soon as the idea had once taken root in his clear and ingenious mind, began slowly the planting and cross-breeding necessary to change the tulips which he had grown already from red to brown, and from brown to dark brown.

By the next year he had obtained flowers of a perfect bistre, and Boxtel espied them in the bed, whereas he had himself as yet only succeeded in producing the light brown.

It might perhaps be interesting to explain to the gentle reader the beautiful chain of theories which go to prove that the tulip borrows its colors from the elements; perhaps we should give him pleasure if we were to maintain and establish that nothing is impossible for a florist who avails himself with judgment and discretion and patience of the sun's heat, the clear water, the juices of the earth, and the cool breezes. But this is not a treatise upon tulips in general; it is the story of one particular tulip which we have undertaken to write, and to that we limit ourselves, however alluring the subject which is so closely allied to ours.

Boxtel, once more worsted by the superiority of his hated rival, was now completely disgusted with tulip-growing, and being half mad with jealousy devoted himself entirely to spying.

The house of his rival was quite open to view, — a gar-

den exposed to the sun, cabinets with transparent glass walls, shelves, cupboards, boxes, and ticketed pigeon-holes, which could easily be surveyed by the telescope. Boxtel allowed his bulbs to rot in the pits, his seedlings to dry up in their cases, and his tulips to wither in the beds; and henceforward concentrating all his energy in his eyesight, occupied himself with nothing else but the doings at Van Baerle's; he breathed through the stalks of Van Baerle's tulips, quenched his thirst with the water he sprinkled upon them, and feasted upon the fine, soft earth which his neighbor scattered upon his cherished bulbs.

But the most curious part of the operations was not performed in the garden.

At one o'clock in the morning Van Baerle would go up to his laboratory, into the glazed cabinet whither Boxtel's telescope had such easy access; and here, as soon as the lamp illuminated the walls and windows, Boxtel would behold the inventive genius of his rival at work.

He beheld him sorting his seeds, and soaking them in liquids which were designed to modify or to deepen their colors. He could imagine what was going on when he saw Cornelius heating certain grains, then moistening them, then combining them with others by a sort of grafting, — a minute and marvellously delicate manipulation, — and when he shut up in darkness those which were expected to furnish the black color, exposed to the sun or to the lamp those which were to produce red, and to the endless reflection of two water-mirrors those intended to be white, and to represent the liquid element in all its purity.

This innocent magic, the fruit of childlike musings and

of manly genius combined; this patient untiring labor, of which Boxtel knew himself to be incapable, made him, gnawed as he was with envy, centre all his life, all his thoughts, and all his hopes in his telescope.

For, strange to say, his own love for and interest in the art of horticulture had not extinguished in Isaac his fierce envy and thirst for revenge. Sometimes, while his telescope was fastened upon Van Baerle, he would have an idea that he was taking aim at him with a musket that never missed; and then he would feel with his finger for the trigger to fire the shot which should strike him down. But it is time that we should show the connection between the labors of the one and the espionage of the other and the visit which Cornelius de Witt paid to his native town.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE HAPPY MAN MAKES ACQUAINTANCE WITH MISFORTUNE.

Cornelius de Witt, having attended to his family affairs, reached the house of his godson, Cornelius van Baerle, just at nightfall in the month of January, 1672.

De Witt, although he was himself very little of a horticulturist or of an artist, went over the whole establishment from the studio to the greenhouse, inspecting everything from the pictures down to the tulips. He thanked his godson for having joined him on the deck of the Admiral's ship, "The Seven Provinces," during the battle of Southwold Bay, and for having given his name to a magnificent tulip, — and all this with the kindness and affability of a father to a son; and while he thus inspected Van Baerle's treasures, a crowd gathered before the door of the happy man, drawn thither by curiosity, but respectful in their demeanor.

All this hubbub excited the attention of Boxtel, who was just taking his evening meal by his fireside. He inquired what it meant, and on being informed of the cause of all the stir, climbed up to his post of observation, where in spite of the cold he took his stand, with the telescope at his eye.

This telescope had not been of great service to him since the autumn of 1671. The tulips, like true daughters of the east averse to cold, will not live in the open

ground in winter. They need the shelter of the house, the soft bed on the shelves, and the congenial warmth of the stove. Van Baerle, therefore, passed the whole winter in his laboratory in the midst of his books and pictures. He went only rarely to the room where he kept his bulbs, unless it were to admit now and then the sun's rays, which he would surprise in their descent, and compel to enter, willy-nilly, by opening one of the movable sashes of the glass front.

On the evening of which we are speaking, after the two Corneliuses had visited together all the apartments of the house, followed by a few servants, De Witt said in a low voice to Van Baerle, —

"My dear son, send these people away, and let us be alone for a while."

The younger man, bowing assent, said aloud, —

"Do you care to see my tulips' drying-room, Mynheer?"

The drying-room! The *pantheon* of the tulip-cult, the tabernacle, the holy of holies, was like Delphi of old interdicted to the profane uninitiated.

Never valet had set his audacious foot within those sacred precincts, as the great Racine would say. Cornelius admitted only the inoffensive broom of an old Frisian housekeeper, who had been his nurse, and who, from the time when he had devoted himself to the culture of tulips, ventured no longer to put onions in his stews, for fear that she might by mistake pluck and serve up one of her foster-child's idols.

At the mere mention of the *drying-room*, therefore, the servants, who were carrying the lights, respectfully fell back. Cornelius, taking the candlestick from the hands

of the foremost, conducted his godfather into the room in question.

Let us here add that the drying-room was that very cabinet with a glass front into which Boxtel was continually prying with his telescope.

The envious spy was watching more intently than ever.

First of all he saw the windows lighted up.

Then two dark figures appeared.

One of them tall, majestic, stern, sat down near the table on which Van Baerle had placed the taper.

In this figure, Boxtel recognized the pale features of Cornelius de Witt, whose long hair, parted in front, fell over his shoulders.

The Ruart de Pulten, after having said some few words to Cornelius, whose purport the prying neighbor could not read in the movement of his lips, took from his breast and handed him a white parcel, carefully sealed, which Boxtel, judging from the manner in which Cornelius received it and placed it in one of the presses, supposed to contain papers of the greatest importance.

His first thought was that this precious deposit inclosed some newly-imported bulbs from Bengal or Ceylon; but he soon reflected that Cornelius de Witt was very little addicted to tulip-growing, and that he only occupied himself with man, — a plant much less agreeable to look upon and vastly more difficult to cultivate with success. He therefore came to the conclusion that the parcel contained simply some papers, and that these papers related to politics.

But why should papers relating to politics be intrusted to Van Baerle, who not only was, but even boasted of

being, an entire stranger to that science, which in his opinion was more occult than chemistry, or even alchemy itself?

It was undoubtedly an important parcel which Cornelius de Witt, already threatened by the unpopularity with which his countrymen were beginning to honor him, was placing in the hands of his godson, — a contrivance so much the more cleverly devised on the part of the Ruart, as it certainly was not at all likely that it would be sought in the house of one who had always stood aloof from every sort of intrigue.

And, besides, if the parcel had been made up of bulbs, Boxtel knew his neighbor too well not to be sure that Van Baerle would not have lost one moment in satisfying his curiosity and feasting his eyes on the present which he had received.

But, on the contrary, Cornelius had received the parcel from the hands of his godfather with every mark of respect, and put it by with the same respectful manner in a drawer, placing it far back, partly, no doubt, so that it might not readily be seen, and partly so that it should not take up too much of the room which was reserved for his bulbs.

The parcel being thus secreted, Cornelius de Witt got up, pressed the hand of his godson, and turned toward the door.

Van Baerle seized the candlestick, and left the room first, so as to light his godfather more satisfactorily.

Thereupon the light gradually left the cabinet, and reappeared on the staircase, then in the porch, and finally in the street, where there was still a great crowd of people waiting to see the Ruart enter his carriage.

The envious fellow was not mistaken in his supposition. The parcel entrusted to Van Baerle and carefully locked up by him was nothing more nor less than John de Witt's correspondence with the Marquis de Louvois. The deposit was made, however, by Cornelius, as he told his brother, without giving to his godson the least intimation concerning the political importance of the secret. He merely desired him not to deliver the parcel to any one but to himself, or to whomsoever he should send to claim it in his name.

And Van Baerle, as we have seen, locked it up with his most precious bulbs.

Then the Ruart took his leave, the bustle ceased, and the lights went out; and our good man thought no more of the parcel, while Boxtel, on the other hand, thought much about it, and looked upon it as a clever pilot does on the distant and scarcely perceptible cloud which grows larger as it approaches and threatens a storm.

And now here are all the branches of our tale planted in that rich tract of country which stretches from Dort to the Hague. Let him follow them who will, in the chapters which follow; we have kept our word, and have demonstrated that neither John nor Cornelius de Witt had at that time in all Holland so relentless a foe as Van Baerle had at his own door in Dort in the person of Isaac Boxtel.

Meanwhile, happy in his ignorance, Van Baerle had proceeded step by step toward the goal suggested by the Horticultural Society of Harlem. He had progressed from bistre to the color of roasted coffee; and on the very day when the frightful events took place at the Hague, which we have related in the preceding chapters, we find him about one o'clock in the day gathering from the beds

the still unfruitful bulbs raised from the seed of tulips of the color of roasted coffee, which, being expected to flower for the first time in the spring of 1673, would undoubtedly produce the large black tulip required by the Harlem Society.

On the 20th of August, 1672, at one o'clock, Cornelius was, therefore, in his drying-room, with his feet resting on the foot-bar of the table and his elbows on the cover, gazing with intense delight on three bulbs which he had just detached from the mother bulb, pure, perfect, and entire, the priceless germs of one of the most marvellous productions of nature and science, whose united efforts, if crowned with success, would render the name of Cornelius van Baerle forever illustrious.

"I shall find the black tulip," said Cornelius to himself, as he detached the bulbs. "I shall obtain the hundred thousand florins offered by the Society. I will distribute them among the poor of Dort; and thus the hatred which every rich man has to encounter in times of civil commotion will be allayed, and I shall be able, without fearing any harm from either Republicans or Orangists, to keep as heretofore my beds in splendid condition. I need no more be afraid lest when a riot is in progress, the shopkeepers of the town and the sailors of the port should come and root up my bulbs, to boil them as onions for their families, as they have sometimes quietly threatened to do when they happened to remember my having paid two or three hundred florins for one bulb. It is therefore settled that I shall give the hundred thousand florins of the Harlem prize to the poor. And yet —"

Here Cornelius paused, and heaved a sigh.

"And yet," he continued, "it would have been so very

delightful to spend the hundred thousand florins on the enlargement of my tulip-bed, or even on a journey to the East, the country of beautiful flowers! But, alas! these are no thoughts for the present times, when muskets, standards, proclamations, and beating of drums are the order of the day."

Van Baerle raised his eyes to heaven, and sighed again. Then, glancing toward his bulbs, — objects of much greater importance to him than all those muskets, standards, drums, and proclamations which in his mind were invented for no other purpose than to disturb the repose of honest people, — he said, —

"These are, indeed, beautiful bulbs; how smooth they are, how well formed! There is that air of melancholy about them which promises to produce a flower of the color of ebony. On their skin one cannot even distinguish the veins with the naked eye. It is almost sure that not a spot will disfigure the mourning robe of the flower which will owe its existence to me.

"By what name shall we call this offspring of my sleepless nights, of my labor and my thought? *Tulipa nigra Barlœnsis.*

"Yes, *Barlœnsis;* a fine name. All the tulip-fanciers — that is to say all the intelligent people of Europe — will feel a thrill of excitement when the report flies upon the wings of the wind to the four quarters of the globe, —

"THE GREAT BLACK TULIP IS FOUND! 'How is it called?' the fanciers will ask. — 'Tulipa nigra Barlœnsis!' — 'Why *Barlœnsis?*' — 'After its grower, Van Baerle,' will be the answer. 'And who is this Van Baerle?' — 'He is the same man who has already produced five

new tulips: The Jane, the John de Witt, the Cornelius de Witt, etc.' Well, that is my ambition. It will cause no one to shed a tear. And people will still talk of my Tulipa nigra Barlænsis, when, perhaps, my godfather, the illustrious politician, will be known only from the tulip to which I have given his name.

"Oh, these lovely bulbs!

"When my tulip has flowered," Cornelius continued, "and when tranquillity is restored in Holland, I shall give to the poor only fifty thousand florins, which after all is a goodly sum for a man who is under no obligation whatever. Then with the remaining fifty thousand florins I shall make experiments. With them I mean to succeed in imparting scent to the tulip. Ah, if I should succeed in giving it the odor of the rose or the carnation, or, what would be still better, a completely new scent; if I should restore to this queen of flowers her natural distinctive perfume, which she has lost in passing from her Eastern to her European throne, and which she must have in the Indian peninsula at Goa, Bombay, and Madras, and especially in that island which in olden times, as is asserted, was the terrestrial paradise, and which is called Ceylon — oh, what glory! In that event, I declare I would rather be Cornelius van Baerle than Alexander, Cæsar, or Maximilian.

"Oh, these adorable bulbs!"

Thus Cornelius indulged in the delights of contemplation, and lost himself in sweetest dreams.

Suddenly the bell of his cabinet was rung much more violently than usual.

Cornelius, startled, laid his hands on his bulbs, and turned round.

"Who is there?" he asked.

"Mynheer," answered the servant, "it is a messenger from the Hague."

"A messenger from the Hague! What does he want?"

"It is Craeke, Mynheer."

"Craeke! the confidential servant of Mynheer John de Witt? Very well, let him wait."

"I cannot wait," said a voice in the hall.

As he spoke, and disregarding orders, Craeke rushed into the drying-room.

This almost forcible entrance was such an infringement on the established rules of the household of Cornelius van Baerle that the latter, as he saw Craeke come headlong into the room, convulsively moved his hand which covered the bulbs, so that two of them fell on the floor, one of them rolling under a small table, and the other into the fireplace.

"The devil!" said Cornelius, eagerly stooping to recover his priceless treasure; "what 's the matter, Craeke?"

"The matter, Mynheer," said Craeke, laying a paper on the large table, on which the third bulb was lying, "the matter is that you are requested to read this paper without losing one moment."

And Craeke, who thought he had remarked in the streets of Dort symptoms of a tumult similar to that which he had witnessed before his departure from the Hague, ran off without even looking behind him.

"All right, all right, my dear Craeke!" said Cornelius, stretching his arm under the table for the bulb; "your paper shall be read, indeed it shall."

Then, examining the bulb which he held in the hollow

of his hand, he said, "Good! here is one of them uninjured. That confounded Craeke! To rush into my drying-room in that way! Let us now look after the other."

And without laying down the bulb which he already held, Baerle went to the fireplace, knelt down, and stirred with the tip of his finger the ashes, which fortunately were quite cold.

He at once felt the other bulb.

"Well, here it is," he said. And looking at it with almost fatherly affection, he exclaimed, "Uninjured, like the other!"

And this very instant, and while Cornelius, still on his knees, was examining the second bulb, the door of the drying-room was so violently shaken, and opened so unceremoniously immediately after, that Cornelius felt rising in his cheeks and his ears the glow of that evil counsellor which is called wrath.

"What is it now?" he demanded; "are people going mad in this house?"

"Oh, Mynheer! Mynheer!" cried the servant, rushing into the drying-room, with a much paler face and much more frightened mien than Craeke had shown.

"Well!" asked Cornelius, foreboding some catastrophe from this double breach of all rules.

"Oh, Mynheer, fly! fly quickly!" cried the servant.

"Fly! what for?"

"Ah, Mynheer! the house is full of guards of the States."

"What do they want?"

"They want you."

"What for?"

"To arrest you."

"Arrest me! arrest me, do you say?"

"Yes, Mynheer, and they are led by a magistrate."

"What's the meaning of all this?" said Van Baerle, grasping in his hands the two bulbs, and glancing in terror toward the staircase.

"They are coming up! they are coming up!" cried the servant.

"Oh, my dear child, my worthy master!" cried the old nurse, who now likewise made her appearance in the drying-room, "take your gold, your jewelry, and fly, fly!"

"But how shall I make my escape, nurse?" said Van Baerle.

"Jump out of the window."

"Twenty-five feet from the ground?"

"But you will fall on six feet of soft soil."

"Yes, but I should fall on my tulips."

"Never mind, jump out!"

Cornelius took the third bulb, approached the window, and opened it; but seeing what havoc he would necessarily cause in his beds rather than what a height he would have to jump, he called out, "Never!" and fell back a step.

At this moment they saw through the banisters of the staircase the points of the halberds of the soldiers.

The housekeeper raised her hands supplicatingly to heaven.

As to Cornelius van Baerle, it must be stated to his honor, not as a man but as a tulip-fancier, that his only thought was for his priceless bulbs.

Looking about for a paper in which to wrap them up, he noticed the fly-leaf from the Bible, which Craeke had

laid upon the table, took it, without in his confusion remembering whence it came, folded in it the three bulbs, secreted them in his bosom, and waited.

Forthwith soldiers, preceded by a magistrate, entered the room.

"Are you Dr. Cornelius van Baerle?" demanded the magistrate (who, although knowing the young man very well, put his questions according to the forms of law, which gave his proceedings a much more dignified air).

"I am he, Master van Spennen," answered Cornelius, politely bowing to his judge, "and you know it very well."

"Then give up to us the seditious papers which you are secreting in your house."

"The seditious papers!" repeated Cornelius, quite dumfounded at the imputation.

"Oh, don't pretend to be astonished!"

"I swear, Master van Spennen," Cornelius replied, "that I am completely at a loss to understand what you mean."

"Then I will put you on the right track, Doctor," said the judge; "give up to us the papers which the traitor Cornelius de Witt left with you in the month of January last."

A sudden light came into the mind of Cornelius.

"Ah!" said Van Spennen, "you begin now to remember, do you not?"

"Indeed I do; but you spoke of seditious papers, and I have none of that sort."

"You deny it, then?"

"Certainly I do."

The magistrate turned so as to take a rapid survey of the whole cabinet.

"Where is the apartment you call your drying-room?" he asked.

"The very same where you now are, Master van Spennen."

The magistrate cast a glance at a small note at the top of his papers.

"All right," he said, like a man who is sure of his ground.

Then, turning round toward Cornelius, he continued, "Will you give up those papers to me?"

"But I cannot, Master van Spennen; those papers do not belong to me; they were deposited with me in trust, and a trust is sacred."

"Doctor Cornelius," said the judge, "in the name of the States I order you to open this drawer and to give up to me the papers which it contains."

Saying this, the judge pointed with his finger to the third drawer of the press near the fireplace.

In this very drawer, indeed, the papers deposited by the Ruart de Pulten with his godson were lying, — a proof that the police had received very exact information.

"Ah, you will not!" said Van Spennen, when he saw Cornelius standing immovable and bewildered; "then I shall open the drawer myself."

And pulling out the drawer to its full length, the magistrate at first alighted on about twenty bulbs, carefully arranged and ticketed, and then on the paper parcel, which was in exactly the same state as when it was delivered by the unfortunate Cornelius de Witt to his godson.

The magistrate broke the seals, tore off the envelope, cast an eager glance on the first leaves which met his eye, and then exclaimed with a terrible voice, —

"Well, justice has been rightly informed after all!"

"How," said Cornelius, "how is this?"

"Make no further pretence of ignorance, Mynheer van Baerle," answered the magistrate, "but follow me."

"What! follow you?" cried the Doctor.

"Yes, for in the name of the States I arrest you."

Arrests were not as yet made in the name of William of Orange; he had not been Stadtholder long enough for that.

"Arrest me!" cried Cornelius, "what have I done, pray?"

"That's no affair of mine, Doctor; you will explain all that before your judges."

"Where?"

"At the Hague."

Cornelius, in mute stupefaction, embraced his old nurse, who was in a swoon; shook hands with his weeping servants, and followed the magistrate, by whom he was put into a coach as a prisoner of State, and was then driven at full speed to the Hague.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN INVASION.

THE incident just related was, as the reader has guessed before this, the infernal work of Mynheer Isaac Boxtel.

It will be remembered that with the help of his telescope not even the least detail of the private meeting between Cornelius de Witt and Van Baerle had escaped him; that he had indeed heard nothing, but had seen everything; and that he had rightly concluded that the papers intrusted by the Ruart to the Doctor must be of great importance, as he saw Van Baerle so carefully secreting the parcel in the drawer where he kept his most precious bulbs.

The upshot of all this was, that when Boxtel — who watched the course of political events much more attentively than did his neighbor Cornelius — heard that the brothers De Witt had been arrested on a charge of high treason against the States, he thought to himself that very likely he need only say one word to cause the arrest of the godson as well as the godfather.

Yet, happy as Boxtel was at the opportunity, he at first shrank with horror from the idea of informing against a man whom this information might lead to the scaffold.

But the most terrible thing about wicked thoughts is that evil minds soon grow familiar with them.

Moreover, Mynheer Isaac Boxtel encouraged himself with the following sophism, —

"Cornelius de Witt must be a bad citizen, since he is charged with high treason and arrested.

"I, on the contrary, am a good citizen, since I am not charged with anything in the world, and am as free as the air of heaven.

"If, therefore, Cornelius de Witt is a bad citizen, — of which there can be no doubt, since he is charged with high treason and arrested, — his accomplice, Cornelius van Baerle, must be no less a bad citizen than himself.

"Therefore, since I am a good citizen, and since it is the duty of every good citizen to inform against the bad ones, it is my duty to inform against Cornelius van Baerle."

Specious as this mode of reasoning was, it would not perhaps have taken so complete a hold of Boxtel, nor perhaps would the envious rascal have yielded to the mere desire of vengeance which was gnawing at his heart, had not the demon of envy been urged on by the spur of cupidity.

Boxtel was quite aware of the progress which Van Baerle had made toward producing the great black tulip.

Dr. Cornelius, notwithstanding all his modesty, had not been able to hide from his most intimate friends that he was all but certain to win, in the year of grace 1673, the prize of a hundred thousand florins offered by the Horticultural Society of Harlem.

It was just this almost certainty of Cornelius van Baerle which caused the fever that raged in the heart of Isaac Boxtel.

If Cornelius should be arrested, there would necessarily be great confusion in his house; and during the night after his arrest, no one would think of keeping watch over the tulips in his garden.

Now, during that night, Boxtel might climb over the wall, and as he knew the location of the bulb which was to produce the great black tulip, he would filch it; and instead of flowering in Cornelius's garden, it would flower in his, Isaac's. He also, instead of Van Baerle, would win the prize of a hundred thousand florins, not to speak of the supreme honor of calling the new flower *Tulipa nigra Boxtellensis*, — a result which would satisfy not only his vengeance, but his cupidity as well.

Awake, he thought of nothing but the great black tulip; asleep, he dreamed of it.

At last, on the 19th of August, about two o'clock in the afternoon, the temptation grew so strong that Mynheer Isaac was no longer able to resist it.

Accordingly, he wrote an anonymous denunciation, the minute exactness of which made up for its want of authenticity, and put it in the post.

Never did a venomous paper, slipped into the jaws of the bronze lions at Venice, produce a more prompt and more terrible effect.

On the same evening the letter reached the principal magistrate, who, without a moment's delay, called his colleagues to assemble the next morning. On the following morning, therefore, they assembled, and decided on Van Baerle's arrest, placing the order for its execution in the hands of Master van Spennen, who, as we have seen, performed his duty like a true Hollander, and arrested the doctor at the very moment when the Orange party at

the Hague were roasting the bleeding shreds of flesh torn from the corpses of Cornelius and John de Witt.

But whether from a feeling of shame, or from being still unused to crime, Isaac Boxtel did not venture that day to point his telescope either at the garden or at the laboratory or at the drying-room.

He knew too well what was about to happen in the home of the poor doctor to have any need to look on. He did not even get up when his only servant — who envied the lot of the servants of Cornelius just as bitterly as Boxtel did that of their master — entered his bedroom. He said to the man, —

"I shall not get up to-day; I am ill."

About nine o'clock he heard a great noise in the street, which made him tremble; at this moment he was paler than a real invalid, and shook more violently than a man in the height of fever.

His servant entered the room; Boxtel hid himself under the counterpane.

"Oh, Mynheer!" cried the servant, not without some suspicion that, while deploring the mishap which had befallen Van Baerle, he was announcing agreeable news to his master, "oh, you do not know then what is happening at this moment?"

"How do you suppose I am to know it?" answered Boxtel, with an almost inaudible voice.

"Well, Mynheer Boxtel, at this moment your neighbor Cornelius van Baerle is being arrested for high treason."

"Nonsense!" Boxtel muttered, with a faltering voice, "the thing is impossible!"

"Faith, sir, at any rate that's what people say; and, besides, I saw Judge van Spennen with the archers entering the house."

"Ah, if you saw it with your own eyes that 's a different matter altogether."

"At all events," said the servant, "I will go and inquire once more. Never fear, Mynheer, I will keep you posted."

Boxtel contented himself with encouraging the zeal of his servant with a gesture.

The man went out, and returned in half an hour.

"Oh, Mynheer, all that I told you is indeed quite true."

"How so?"

"Mynheer van Baerle is arrested, and has been put into a carriage, and hurried off to the Hague!"

"To the Hague?"

"Yes, to the Hague; and if what people say is true, it won't do him much good."

"And what do they say?" Boxtel asked.

"Faith! they say — but it is not quite sure — that by this hour the burghers are probably murdering Mynheer Cornelius and Mynheer John de Witt."

"Oh!" muttered Boxtel, with a noise in his throat like a death-rattle, closing his eyes to shut out the dreadful picture which presented itself to his imagination.

"The devil!" said the servant to himself, leaving the room, "Mynheer Isaac Boxtel must be very sick not to have jumped out of bed on hearing such good news."

In reality, Isaac Boxtel was very sick, with a sickness like that of a man who has murdered another.

But he had murdered his man with a double object; the first was attained, the second was still to be attained.

Night closed in. It was night which Boxtel had been waiting for.

As soon as it was dark he got up.

He then climbed into his sycamore.

He had judged rightly. No one thought of keeping watch over the garden ; the house and the servants were in the utmost confusion.

He heard the clock strike ten, eleven, twelve.

At midnight, with a beating heart, trembling hands, and a livid countenance, he descended from the tree, took a ladder, leaned it against the wall, mounted it to the last step but one, and listened.

All was perfectly quiet ; not a sound broke the silence of the night. One solitary light was burning in the house ; it was in the nurse's room.

This silence and this darkness emboldened Boxtel ; he got astride the wall, stopped for an instant, and, having ascertained that there was nothing to fear, he put his ladder from his own garden into that of Cornelius, and descended.

Then, knowing to an inch where the bulbs which were to produce the black tulip were planted, he ran toward the spot, following, however, the walks in order not to be betrayed by his footprints, and on arriving at the precise spot, with the eagerness of a tiger he plunged his hand into the soft ground.

He found nothing, and thought he was mistaken.

Meanwhile the perspiration stood in great beads on his brow.

He felt about close by the spot — nothing.

He felt about to the right and to the left — nothing.

He felt about in front and behind — nothing.

He was nearly mad when at last he could no longer doubt that on that very morning the earth had been turned.

In fact, while Boxtel was lying in bed, Cornelius had gone down to his garden, had taken up the mother bulb, and, as we have seen, divided it into three.

Boxtel could not bring himself to leave the place. He dug up with his hands more than ten square feet of ground.

At last no doubt remained of his ill luck.

Mad with rage, he returned to his ladder, mounted the wall, drew up the ladder, flung it into his own garden, and jumped after it.

All at once a last ray of hope presented itself to his mind: the seedling bulbs might be in the drying-room; it was therefore only requisite to make his entry there as he had done into the garden.

There he would find them; and, moreover, it was not at all difficult, as the sashes of the drying-room might be raised like those of a greenhouse. Cornelius had opened them that morning, and no one had thought of closing them again.

Everything, therefore, depended upon whether Boxtel could procure a ladder of sufficient length, — one of twenty feet instead of twelve.

He had noticed in the street where he lived a house which was being repaired and against which a very tall ladder was placed.

This ladder would do admirably, unless the workmen had taken it away.

He ran to the house; the ladder was there. Boxtel took it, carried it with great exertion to his garden, and with even greater difficulty raised it against the wall of Van Baerle's house, where it just reached to the window.

Boxtel put a lighted dark lantern into his pocket, mounted the ladder, and slipped into the drying-room.

On reaching this sanctuary of the florist he stopped, supporting himself against the table; his legs failed him; his heart beat as if it would choke him. Here it was even worse than in the garden. It would seem as if the open air added respectability to transgressions of the right of property; a man who would leap a hedge or climb a wall stops at the door or window of a house.

In the garden Boxtel was only a trespasser; in the room he was a thief.

However, he took courage again: he had not gone so far to turn back empty-handed.

But in vain did he search the whole room, and open and shut all the drawers, even that special one where the parcel which had been so fatal to Cornelius had been deposited; he found ticketed, as in a botanical garden, the "Jane," the "John de Witt," the bistre, and the roasted-coffee-colored tulip; but of the black tulip, or rather of the seedling bulbs within which it was still sleeping, not a trace was to be found.

And yet, on looking over the register of seeds and bulbs, which Van Baerle kept in duplicate, if possible even with greater exactitude and care than the first commercial houses of Amsterdam their ledgers, Boxtel read the following entry: —

"On this 20th of August, 1672, I took up the mother bulb of the great black tulip, which I have divided into three perfect bulbs."

"Oh, those bulbs, those bulbs!" howled Boxtel, turning over everything in the drying-room; "where can he have concealed them?"

Then suddenly striking his forehead a violent blow, he shrieked, "Oh, wretch that I am! oh, thrice fool, Boxtel! Would any one be separated from his bulbs? Would he leave them at Dort when he was to go to the Hague? Could one live away from one's bulbs, when they are the bulbs of the great black tulip? He had time to get hold of them, the scoundrel; he has them about him, he has taken them to the Hague!"

It was like a flash of lightning which showed to Boxtel the abyss of a useless crime.

Boxtel sank quite paralyzed on that very table and on that very spot where, some hours before, the unfortunate Van Baerle had so leisurely and with such intense delight contemplated the bulbs of the black tulip.

"But then, after all," said the envious Boxtel, raising his livid face, "if he has them he can keep them only so long as he lives, and —"

The rest of this detestable thought was expressed in a hideous smile.

"The bulbs must be at the Hague," he said; "therefore I can no longer live at Dort.

"To the Hague for the bulbs, then! to the Hague!"

And without taking any notice of the immense treasures about him, so entirely were his thoughts absorbed by another inestimable treasure, he climbed out of the window, glided down the ladder, carried it back to the place whence he had taken it, and, like a beast of prey, returned growling to his house.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE FAMILY CELL.

It was about midnight when poor Van Baerle was locked up in the prison of the Buytenhof.

What Rosa foresaw had come to pass. On finding the cell of Cornelius de Witt empty, the wrath of the people ran very high, and had Gryphus fallen into the hands of those madmen, he would certainly have had to pay with his life for the prisoner.

But their wrath had been glutted by the vengeance wreaked upon the two brothers when they were overtaken by the murderers, thanks to the precaution which William — the man of precautions — had taken in having the gates of the city closed.

There had been a moment, therefore, when the prison was deserted, and dead silence succeeded the frightful yelling and howling which had died away in the distance.

Rosa availed herself of this favorable moment to leave her hiding-place, followed by her father.

The prison was completely deserted, — for why remain there while murder was being done at the Tol-Hek?

Gryphus came forth trembling behind the courageous Rosa. They went to close the great door as far as they could close it; that is to say, considering that it was half

demolished. It was easy to see that a flood of resistless wrath had vented itself upon it.

About four o'clock the uproar was heard returning, but it contained nothing to alarm Gryphus and his daughter. It was only the noise made by the two dead bodies which the mob were dragging along with the purpose of hanging them at the usual place of execution.

Rosa hid herself again, but only that she might not see the ghastly spectacle.

At midnight there was a knocking at the door of the Buytenhof, or rather at the barricade which served in its stead.

It was Cornelius van Baerle who was being brought in.

When Gryphus received this new inmate, and read in the warrant the name and station of his prisoner, he muttered with his professional smile, —

"Godson of Cornelius de Witt! Well, young man, we have your family cell here, and you shall have it."

Chuckling over his own joke, the ferocious Orangeman took his lantern and his keys to conduct Cornelius to the cell which on that very morning Cornelius de Witt had left to go into "exile," as exile is understood in times of revolution by those sublime moralists who lay it down as an axiom of lofty policy, —

"It is the dead only who do not return."

On his way to that cell the disconsolate florist heard nothing but the barking of a dog and saw nothing but the face of a young girl.

The dog rushed forth from a niche in the wall, rattling his heavy chain, and took a thorough sniff at Cornelius in order that he might be more certain to recognize him, in case he should be pu[t]

The young girl, while the prisoner was making the stair-rail groan under his heavy hand, half opened the door of a chamber occupied by her on the landing of the same staircase; and holding the lamp in her right hand, she at the same time lit up her pretty blooming face, surrounded by a profusion of golden locks in thick braids, while with her left she held her white night-dress closely over her breast, having been roused from her first slumber by the unexpected arrival of Van Baerle.

It would have made a fine picture, worthy of Master Rembrandt's pencil, — the gloomy winding stairs illuminated by the reddish glare of Gryphus's lantern, with his scowling visage at the top; the melancholy features of Cornelius bending over the banister to look; and below him the sweet face of Rosa, against the background of her lighted room, and her modest instinctive movement, rendered somewhat ineffectual perhaps by Cornelius's advantageous position, standing on the stairs above, whence his gaze fell tenderly and sadly upon the fair, beautifully-moulded shoulders of the damsel.

And farther down, quite in the shade, where the darkness blotted out the details of the picture, were the glistening eyes of the mastiff, who was rattling his chain, whose links the double light from Rosa's lamp and Gryphus's lantern made to shine like gold spangles.

But the sublime master could never have succeeded in depicting the sorrow expressed in Rosa's face when she saw this pale, handsome young man slowly climbing the stairs, and applied to him the words which her father had just spoken, "*You shall have the family cell.*"

This vision lasted but a moment, — much less time than we have taken to describe it. Gryphus then pro-

ceeded on his way. Cornelius was forced to follow him, and five minutes later he entered his cell, which it is unnecessary to describe, as the reader is already acquainted with it.

Gryphus pointed with his finger to the bed which had witnessed the bitter suffering of the martyr who on that very day had gone to meet his Maker. Then taking up his lantern he left the cell.

Thus left alone, Cornelius threw himself on his bed, but he could not sleep; he kept his eye fixed on the narrow window, barred with iron, which looked on the square of the Buytenhof, — and thus he saw, above the trees, the first pale ray of dawn fall from heaven over the earth like a white mantle.

Now and then, during the night, horses had galloped at a smart pace through the square, the heavy tramp of the patrols had resounded on the pavement, and the matches of the arquebuses, flaring in the west wind, had intermittently lighted up his window.

But when the rising sun began to gild the roofs of the houses, Cornelius, eager to know whether there was any living creature in his vicinity, approached the window and looked gloomily around.

At the end of the square a dark mass, whose blackness was hardly relieved by the morning light, rose before him, its irregular outlines standing out in contrast to the lighter-hued houses.

Cornelius recognized the gibbet.

On it were suspended two shapeless masses, which were no more than bleeding trunks.

The good people of the Hague had chopped off great pieces of the flesh of their victims, but faithfully carried

the remainder to the gibbet, in order to have an excuse for a double inscription, written on a huge placard, on which Cornelius, with the keen sight of a young man of twenty-eight, was able to read the following lines, daubed by the coarse brush of a sign-painter : —

"Here hang the great villain named John de Witt, and the little rogue Cornelius de Witt, his brother, who were enemies of the people, but great friends of the king of France."

Cornelius uttered a cry of horror, and in an agony of almost delirious terror beat upon his door with hands and feet so violently and imperatively that Gryphus, with his bunch of huge keys in his hand, came running up in a rage.

He opened the door, with terrible imprecations against the prisoner who disturbed him at an hour at which he was not in the habit of being disturbed.

"Upon my soul, I believe this new De Witt is insane," he cried ; "but all those De Witts have the devil in them."

"Master, master," cried Cornelius, seizing the jailer by the arm and dragging him toward the window, "master, what 's that I read down there ? "

"Where do you mean ? "

"On that placard."

Trembling, pale, and gasping for breath, he pointed to the gibbet, with the cynical inscription surmounting it, at the farther end of the square.

Gryphus began to laugh.

"Ha ! ha ! " he retorted, "so you have read it, have you ? Well, my good sir, that 's what people get for corresponding with the enemies of his Highness the Prince of Orange."

"The brothers De Witt murdered!" Cornelius muttered, with beads of sweat on his brow; and he sank upon his bed, his arms hanging by his side, and his eyes closed.

"The brothers De Witt have undergone the sentence of the people," said Gryphus; "you call that murdered, do you? Well, I call it executed."

And seeing that the prisoner had not only become calm, but was apparently quite overcome by the discovery he had made, he rushed from the cell, violently slamming the door and noisily drawing the bolts.

When he came to himself, Cornelius found himself alone, and recognized the fact that the room where he was — "the family cell" as Gryphus had called it — was likely to be but a stopping-place on his journey to an ignominious death.

And as he was a philosopher, and more than that, a Christian, he began by praying for the soul of his godfather, then for that of the Grand Pensionary, and at last submitted with resignation to all the sufferings to which God might be pleased to subject him.

Then turning once more from thoughts of Heaven to earthly matters, and having brought his mind back into his dungeon and satisfied himself that he was alone therein, he drew from his breast the three bulbs of the black tulip, and concealed them behind a block of stone, on which the traditional water-jug was standing, in the darkest corner of his cell.

Useless labor of so many years! Such sweet hopes crushed! His great discovery was, after all, to lead to nought, just as his own career was to end in premature death. Here, in his prison, there was not a trace

of vegetation, not an atom of soil, not a ray of sunshine.

At this thought Cornelius fell into a gloomy despair, from which he was roused only by an extraordinary circumstance.

What was this circumstance?

With the reader's permission, we will reserve that information for the following chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE JAILER'S DAUGHTER.

On the evening of that day, Gryphus, as he was bringing the prisoner's scanty meal, slipped on the damp flags in opening the door of the cell, and fell in the attempt to recover himself. His hand turned the wrong way, and he broke his arm just above the wrist.

Cornelius made a movement to assist him; but Gryphus, who was not yet aware of the serious nature of his injury, called out to him, —

"It is nothing; don't you stir!"

He then tried to support himself on his arm, but the bone gave way; then he felt the pain, and uttered a sharp cry.

He knew that his arm must be broken; and this man, so harsh in his treatment of others, fell swooning on the threshold, where he remained motionless and cold, as if dead.

During all this time the door of the cell stood open, and Cornelius found himself almost free. But the thought never entered his mind of profiting by this accident. He had seen from the manner in which the arm was bent, and from the noise it made in bending, that the bone was fractured, and that the patient must be in great pain; and now he thought of nothing but administering relief to the sufferer, notwithstanding the evil

disposition the man had shown during their short interview.

At the noise of Gryphus's fall, and at the cry which escaped him, a hasty step was heard on the staircase, and at sight of the lovely apparition which followed the footfall, Cornelius uttered an exclamation which was echoed by the shriller tones of a young girl.

She who thus echoed Cornelius's cry was the beautiful young Frisian, who, seeing her father stretched on the ground and the prisoner bending over him, thought at first that Gryphus, whose brutality she well knew, had fallen in a struggle between himself and the prisoner.

Cornelius understood what was passing in the mind of the girl as soon as the thought came to her.

But she saw the true state of the case at a glance, and, ashamed of her first thoughts, she raised her beautiful eyes, wet with tears, to the young man, and said to him, —

"I beg your pardon, and thank you, Mynheer, — pardon for what I have thought, and thanks for what you are doing."

Cornelius blushed.

"I am but doing my duty as a Christian," said he, "in helping my neighbor."

"Yes, and while you help him this evening, you forget the abuse which he heaped on you this morning. Oh, Mynheer, this is more than human; it is more than Christian!"

Cornelius cast his eyes on the beautiful maid, marvelling much to hear from the mouth of one so humbly born such a noble and feeling speech.

But he had no time to express his surprise. Gryphus

recovered from his swoon, opened his eyes, and as his accustomed brutality returned with his return to consciousness, he growled, "That's it! if one is in a hurry to bring a prisoner his supper, and in his hurry falls and breaks his arm, he is left lying on the ground."

"Hush, Father," said Rosa, "you are unjust to this young gentleman, whom I found trying to help you."

"He!" Gryphus rejoined, with a doubtful air.

"It is quite true, Mynheer; and I am quite ready to help you still more."

"You!" said Gryphus, "are you a medical man?"

"It was formerly my profession."

"So that you would be able to set my arm?"

"Perfectly."

"What would you need for that purpose?"

"Two splinters of wood merely, and some linen for a bandage."

"Do you hear, Rosa?" said Gryphus, "the prisoner is going to set my arm, that's a saving. Come, help me to get up; I feel as heavy as lead."

Rosa lent the sufferer her shoulder; he put his unhurt arm round her neck, and with an effort got on his legs, while Cornelius, to save his steps, pushed a chair towards him.

Gryphus sat down; then, turning towards his daughter, he said, —

"Well, did n't you hear? Go and get what is wanted."

Rosa left the room, and immediately after returned with two barrel staves and a large roll of linen.

Cornelius had made use of the intervening moments to take off the man's coat, and to turn back his shirt-sleeve.

"Is this all that you need, Mynheer?" asked Rosa.

"Yes, my child," answered Cornelius, looking at the things which she had brought; "yes, that 's right. Now, push this table under, while I support your father's arm."

Rosa pushed the table, Cornelius placed the broken arm on it, in order to have it level, and with perfect skill set the bone, adjusted the splinters, and fastened the bandages.

As the last pin was inserted, the jailer fainted a second time.

"Go and get some vinegar, my dear," said Cornelius; "we will bathe his temples, and he will soon come to."

But instead of doing as he suggested, Rosa, after having assured herself that her father was still unconscious, approached Cornelius and said, —

"One good turn deserves another, Mynheer."

"What do you mean, my dear?" asked Cornelius.

"I mean to say that the judge who is to examine you to-morrow has inquired to-day about the room in which you are confined; he was told that you were occupying the cell of Mynheer Cornelius de Witt, and at that reply he laughed in a sinister way, which makes me fear that no good fortune awaits you."

"But," asked Cornelius, "what harm can they do to me?"

"Look at that gibbet!"

"But I am not guilty," said Cornelius.

"Were they guilty whom you see down there, — hanged and mangled, and torn to pieces?"

"That 's true," said Cornelius, gravely.

"And besides," continued Rosa, "public opinion has

adjudged you guilty. But whether innocent or guilty, your trial begins to-morrow, and the day after you will be condemned. Matters are settled very quickly in these times."

"Well, and what do you conclude from all this?"

"I conclude that I am alone, that I am weak, that my father is lying in a swoon, that the dog is muzzled, and that consequently there is nothing to prevent your making your escape. Fly, then, — that is my conclusion."

"What do you say?"

"I say that I was not able to save Mynheer Cornelius or Mynheer John de Witt, alas! and that I should like to save you. Only be quick; there, my father is regaining his breath. One minute more, and he will open his eyes, and it will be too late. Do you hesitate?"

In fact, Cornelius stood immovable, looking at Rosa, yet looking at her as if he did not hear her.

"Don't you understand me?" said the young girl, with some impatience.

"Yes, I do," said Cornelius, "but —"

"But what?"

"I will not do it; they would accuse you."

"What does that matter?" said Rosa, blushing.

"I am very grateful to you, my dear child," replied Cornelius; "but I prefer to remain."

"You prefer to remain! alas, alas! don't you understand that you will be condemned, — condemned to death, executed on the scaffold, perhaps assassinated and torn to pieces, just as Mynheer John and Mynheer Cornelius were? For heaven's sake don't think of me, but fly from

this room! Take care! it is an ill-omened spot for all who love the name of De Witt!"

"Halloa!" cried the jailer, recovering his senses, "who is that talking of those rogues, those wretches, those villains, the De Witts?"

"Don't get excited, my good man," said Cornelius, with a sweet smile; "the worst thing in the world for a fracture is to allow the blood to get heated."

Thereupon, he said in an undertone to Rosa: "My child, I am innocent, and I shall await my trial with the tranquillity and calmness befitting an innocent man."

"Hush!" said Rosa.

"Why hush?"

"My father must not suppose that we have been talking to each other."

"What harm would that do?"

"What harm? He would never allow me to come here any more," was the maiden's ingenuous reply.

Cornelius received this naïve explanation with a smile; it seemed as if a ray of light were breaking in upon his misery.

"Now, then, what are you two chattering about there?" said Gryphus, rising and supporting his right arm with his left hand.

"Nothing," said Rosa; "Mynheer is explaining to me what diet you must adopt."

"What diet I must adopt? Diet! diet! Well, young woman, I shall put you on diet too."

"What will mine be, Father?"

"To keep away from the cells of the prisoners; and if ever you should happen to visit them, to leave again as soon as possible. Come now, go on ahead of me, and be quick."

Rosa and Cornelius exchanged glances.
That of Rosa seemed to say, —
"There, you see how it is!"
While Cornelius's look of resignation replied, —
"The Lord's will be done!"

## CHAPTER XI.

### CORNELIUS VAN BAERLE'S WILL.

Rosa was not mistaken; the judges came on the following day to the Buytenhof, and interrogated Cornelius van Baerle. The examination, however, did not last long, for it was easily made to appear that Cornelius had kept at his house the fatal correspondence of the brothers De Witt with France.

He did not deny it.

The only point about which the judges seemed to have any doubt was whether this correspondence had been intrusted to him by his godfather Cornelius de Witt.

But since the death of those two martyrs, Van Baerle had no longer any reason for withholding the truth; therefore he not only did not deny that the parcel had been delivered to him by Cornelius de Witt himself, but he also stated all the circumstances under which it was done.

This confession involved the godson in the crime of the godfather; for it was argued that there was manifest complicity between Cornelius de Witt and Cornelius van Baerle.

The honest doctor did not confine himself to this avowal, but told the whole truth with regard to his own tastes, habits, and daily life. He told of his indifference to politics, his love of study, of the fine arts, of science,

and of flowers. He declared that since the day when Cornelius de Witt came to Dort and handed him the parcel, he himself had never touched or even noticed it.

To this it was objected that in this respect he could not possibly be speaking the truth, since the papers had been deposited in a drawer in which he used to plunge his hands and his eyes every day.

Cornelius answered that it was indeed so; but that he never put his hand into the drawer save to ascertain whether his bulbs were dry, and that he never looked into it save to see if they were beginning to sprout.

To this again it was objected that his pretended indifference respecting this deposit was not to be reasonably entertained, as he could not have received such papers from the hand of his godfather without being made acquainted with their important character.

He replied that his godfather loved him too well, and, above all, that he was too considerate a man, to have communicated to him anything of the contents of the parcel, well knowing that such a confidence would only have caused anxiety to him who received it.

To this it was objected that if De Witt had done what he alleged, he would have added to the parcel, in case of accident, a certificate setting forth that his godson was an entire stranger to the nature of this correspondence; or at least he would, during his trial, have written a letter to him which might serve to justify him.

Cornelius replied that undoubtedly his godfather had not thought that his parcel was in any danger, hidden as it was in a press which was held in as deep veneration as the Ark of the Covenant by the whole Van Baerle household; and that, consequently, he had considered

such a certificate useless. As to a letter, he certainly had some remembrance that some moments previous to his arrest, while he was absorbed in the contemplation of one of the rarest of his bulbs, John de Witt's servant entered his drying-room and handed him a paper; but the whole was to him only like a vague dream. The servant had disappeared, and as to the paper, perhaps it might be found, if a proper search were made.

As far as Craeke was concerned, it was impossible to find him, as he had left Holland.

As to the paper, there was so little probability of finding it that no one gave himself the trouble to look for it.

Cornelius himself did not much press this point, because even if the paper should turn up, it could not have any connection with the correspondence which constituted the *corpus delicti*.

The judges wished to appear in the light of urging Cornelius to make a more vigorous defence than he was doing; and so they displayed that benevolent patience which is the distinguishing mark either of a magistrate who is interested for the prisoner, or of a victor who has overthrown his adversary, and has so completely made himself master that he has no need of further severity to complete his destruction.

Cornelius did not respond to this hypocritical pretence of impartiality; and in a last answer, which he made with the noble bearing of a martyr and the calm serenity of an innocent man, he said, —

"You ask me things, gentlemen, to which I have no other reply to make than the exact truth. This is the exact truth. The parcel was put into my hands in the way I have described; I declare, before God, that I was,

and am still, ignorant of its contents, and that it was not until my arrest that I learned that this parcel contained the correspondence of the Grand Pensionary with the Marquis de Louvois. And lastly, I protest that I do not understand how any one should have known that this parcel was in my house; and, above all, how I can be deemed guilty for having received what my illustrious and unfortunate godfather brought to me."

This was Van Baerle's whole defence. The judges then began their deliberations.

They considered that every offshoot of civil discord is to be deplored, because it adds fresh fuel to the flame which it is the interest of all to extinguish.

One of them (and he bore the character of a profound observer) maintained that this young man, so phlegmatic in appearance, might well be a very dangerous subject in reality, for beneath his cloak of impassibility he was very likely to conceal an ardent desire to revenge his friends the De Witts.

Another observed that the love of tulips was perfectly consistent with politics, and that history demonstrates that many very dangerous traitors had been engaged in gardening, just as if it had been their profession, while really they were intent upon altogether different matters. Witness Tarquin the Elder, who grew poppies at Gabii, and the Great Condé, who watered his carnations at the castle of Vincennes, at the very moment when the former was meditating his return to Rome, and the latter his escape from prison.

This last speaker concluded with the following dilemma: —

"Either Cornelius van Baerle is a great lover of tulips

or a great lover of politics; in either case he has told us a falsehood, — first, because his taking an interest in politics is proved by the letters which were found at his house; and secondly, because his passion for tulips is also proved. The bulbs fully establish that fact. Finally, and herein lies the enormity of the case, since Cornelius van Baerle devotes himself to tulips and to politics at one and the same time, he must be of a hybrid character, of an amphibious organization, working with equal ardor at politics and at tulips, — which demonstrates the existence in him of all the characteristics of the class of men most dangerous to public tranquillity, and establishes a certain, or rather a complete, analogy between his character and that of those master minds, of which Tarquin the Elder and the Great Condé have been but now felicitously quoted as examples."

The upshot of all these reasonings was that his Highness, the Prince Stadtholder of Holland, would doubtless feel infinitely obliged to the magistracy of the Hague, if they simplified for him the government of the Seven Provinces by destroying even the least germ of conspiracy against his authority.

This argument capped all the others; and in order so much the more effectually to destroy the germ of conspiracy, sentence of death was unanimously pronounced against Cornelius van Baerle, accused and convicted of having, under the innocent guise of a tulip-fancier, participated in the detestable intrigues and abominable plots of the brothers De Witt against Dutch nationality, and in their secret relations with their French enemy.

The sentence went on to say that "the aforesaid Cornelius van Baerle shall be led from the prison of the

Buytenhof to the scaffold in the square of the same name, where his head shall be cut off by the public executioner."

As this deliberation was a most serious affair, it lasted a full half-hour, during which the prisoner was remanded to his cell.

There the Recorder of the States came to read the sentence to him.

Master Gryphus was detained in bed by the fever caused by the fracture of his arm. His keys had passed into the hands of one of his assistants. Behind this turnkey, who led the way before the Recorder, Rosa, the fair Frisian maid, had slipped into the recess of the door, with a handkerchief to her mouth to stifle her sighs and her sobs.

Cornelius listened to the sentence with an expression rather of surprise than sadness.

After the sentence was read, the Recorder asked him whether he had anything to answer.

"Indeed I have not," he replied. "Only I confess that among all the causes of death which a cautious man should foresee so that he may guard against them, I never have thought of this."

Thereupon the Recorder saluted Van Baerle with all that consideration which such functionaries generally bestow upon great criminals of every sort.

As he was taking his leave, Cornelius asked, "By the way, what day will the sentence be carried out, please?"

"Why, to-day," answered the Recorder, somewhat oppressed by the self-possession of the condemned man.

A sob was heard behind the door.

Cornelius turned to see whence it came; but Rosa had foreseen such a movement and had fallen back.

"What hour is appointed!" continued Cornelius.

"Twelve o'clock, Mynheer."

"The devil!" exclaimed Cornelius. "I think I heard the clock strike ten about twenty minutes ago: I have not much time to spare."

"Indeed you have not, if you wish to make your peace with God," said the Recorder, bowing to the ground. "You may ask for any clergyman you please."

Saying these words he backed himself out; and the substitute jailer was about to follow him and lock the door of Cornelius's cell, when a white, trembling arm was interposed between him and the heavy door.

Cornelius saw only the golden-brocade cap, daintily trimmed with white lace, — a head-dress peculiar to lovely Frisian damsels; he heard nothing but some one whispering into the ear of the turnkey. But the latter put his heavy keys into the white hand which was stretched out to receive them, and descending a few steps, sat down on the staircase, — which thus was guarded above by himself, and below by the dog. The cap turned round, and Cornelius beheld the face of Rosa, moist with tears, and her beautiful blue eyes streaming with them.

She went up to Cornelius, folding her arms on her heaving breast.

"Alas, Mynheer! alas!" she sobbed, but could say no more.

"My good girl," Cornelius replied with emotion, "what do you wish? I tell you frankly that my power and influence are very limited henceforth."

"I come to ask a favor of you," said Rosa, extend-

ing her hands partly toward him and partly toward heaven.

"Don't weep so, Rosa," said the prisoner, "for your tears move me much more deeply than my approaching fate; and you know the less guilty a prisoner is, the more incumbent is it upon him to die calmly, and even joyfully, as he dies a martyr. So weep no more, and tell me what you desire, my pretty Rosa."

She knelt at his feet. "Forgive my father," she said.

"Your father!" said Cornelius, in amazement.

"Yes; he has been so harsh to you. But it is his nature; he is so to every one, and you are not the only one whom he has bullied."

"He is punished, my dear Rosa, more than enough, by the accident that has befallen him; and I forgive him."

"I thank you," said Rosa. "And now tell me — oh, pray, tell me — can I do nothing for you in return?"

"You can dry your beautiful eyes, my dear child," answered Cornelius, with a gentle smile.

"But for you, — for you?"

"A man who has only one hour longer to live must be a great Sybarite still to want anything, my dear Rosa."

"The clergyman whom they have proposed to you?"

"I have worshipped God all my life; I have worshipped Him in His works, and blessed His will. He can have nothing against me, and so I do not wish for a clergyman. The last thought which occupies my mind, however, has reference to the glory of the Almighty. Help me, my dear, I beseech you, in carrying out my last thought."

"Oh, Mynheer Cornelius, speak, speak!" exclaimed Rosa, still bathed in tears.

"Give me your fair hand, and promise not to laugh, my dear child."

"Laugh!" exclaimed Rosa, despairingly, — "laugh, at such a moment! You cannot have looked at me, Mynheer Cornelius."

"I have looked at you, Rosa, both with my bodily eyes and with the eyes of my soul. I have never seen a woman more fair or more pure than you are, and if from this moment I take no more notice of you, forgive me; it is only because, being ready to leave this world, I prefer to do so without regret."

Rosa started in alarm. As the prisoner pronounced these words, the belfry clock of the Buytenhof struck eleven.

Cornelius understood her. "Yes, yes, let us make haste," he said; "you are right, Rosa."

Then taking the paper with the three bulbs from his breast, where he had again put it since he had no longer any fear of being searched, he said, —

"My dear girl, I have been very fond of flowers. That was at a time when I did not know that there was anything else to be loved. Don't blush, Rosa, nor turn away, even though I should make you a declaration of love. Alas, poor dear! it would be of no consequence; down there in the square there is a certain keen blade which in sixty minutes will punish my boldness. Well, Rosa, I loved flowers dearly, and I have found — or at least I believe so — the secret of the great black tulip, which it has been considered impossible to grow, and for which, as you may or may not know, a prize of a hundred

thousand florins has been offered by the Horticultural Society of Harlem. These hundred thousand florins — and Heaven knows they are not my only subject of regret — these hundred thousand florins I have here in this paper; for they are won by the three bulbs wrapped up in it, — which you may take, Rosa, for I make you a present of them."

"Mynheer Cornelius!"

"Yes, yes, Rosa, you may take them; you are not wronging any one, my child. I am alone in this world. My parents are dead; I never had a sister or a brother; I have never had a thought of loving any one with what is called love, and if any one has ever thought of loving me, I have not known it. Moreover, you can see well, Rosa, that I am abandoned by everybody, since at this moment you alone are with me in my prison, consoling and assisting me."

"But, Mynheer, a hundred thousand florins!"

"Well, let us talk seriously, my dear child. Those hundred thousand florins will be a nice marriage-portion to go with your pretty face; you shall have them, for I am quite sure of my bulb. You shall have them, Rosa, dear Rosa, and I ask nothing in return but your promise that you will marry some worthy fellow, not too old, whom you love, and who will love you as dearly as I loved my flowers. Don't interrupt me, Rosa, — I have only a few minutes more."

The poor girl was nearly choking with her sobs.

Cornelius took her hand.

"Listen to me," he continued; "this is what you must do. Take some earth from my garden at Dort. Ask Butruysheim, my gardener, for some soil from my bed

number six; fill a deep box with it, and plant in it these three bulbs. They will flower next May, — that is to say, in seven months; and when you see the flower forming on the stem, be careful at night to protect them from the wind and by day to screen them from the sun. They will bear a black flower; I am quite sure of it. You must at once inform the President of the Harlem Society. He will cause the color of the flower to be declared by the committee, and the hundred thousand florins will be paid to you."

Rosa heaved a deep sigh.

"And now," continued Cornelius, wiping away a tear which was glistening in his eye, and which was shed much more for that marvellous black tulip which he was not to see than for the life which he was about to lose, "I desire nothing more, except that the tulip should be called 'Rosa Barlænsis,' — that is to say, that its name should combine yours and mine; and as, of course, you do not understand Latin, and might therefore forget this name, try to get me a pencil and paper, so that I may write it down for you."

Rosa sobbed afresh, and handed him a book, bound in shagreen, which bore the initials C. W.

"What is this?" asked the prisoner.

"Alas!" replied Rosa, "it is the Bible of your poor godfather, Cornelius de Witt. From it he derived strength to endure the torture, and to hear his sentence without flinching. I found it in this cell, after the martyr's death, and have preserved it as a relic. To-day I brought it to you, for it seemed to me that this book must possess in itself a divine power. But God be praised! you needed no strength beyond what he has

given you. Write in it what you have to write, Mynheer Cornelius; and though, unfortunately, I am not able to read, I will take care that what you write shall be attended to."

Cornelius took the Bible, and kissed it reverently.

"With what shall I write?" he asked.

"There is a pencil in the Bible," said Rosa; "I found it there, and let it remain."

This was the pencil which John de Witt had lent to his brother, and which he had forgotten to take back.

Cornelius took it, and on the second fly-leaf (for it will be remembered that the first was torn out), like his godfather, with death at hand, he wrote no less firmly: —

On this 23d of August, 1672, being about to render my soul to God on the scaffold, although I am guiltless in His sight, I bequeath to Rosa Gryphus the only property which remains to me of all that I have possessed in this world, the rest having been confiscated: I bequeath, I say, to Rosa Gryphus three bulbs, which I am convinced must produce in the ensuing month of May the great black tulip, for which a prize of a hundred thousand florins has been offered by the Harlem Society, — requesting that she may be paid the said sum in my stead, as my sole heiress, upon the sole conditions that she marry some respectable young man of about my age, who loves her, and whom she loves, and that she give the great black tulip, which will constitute a new species, the name of "Rosa Barlænsis;" that is to say, hers and mine combined.

So may God grant me mercy, and to her, health and long life

CORNELIUS VAN BAERLE.

Then, giving the Bible to Rosa, he said, —

"Read."

"Alas!" she answered, "I have already told you I cannot read."

Cornelius then read to Rosa the will that he had just made.

The sobs of the poor girl redoubled.

"Do you accept my conditions?" asked the prisoner, with a melancholy smile, kissing the trembling hands of the lovely maiden.

"Oh, I don't know, Mynheer," she stammered.

"You don't know, child, — and why not?"

"Because there is one condition which I am afraid I cannot keep."

"Which? I thought that all was settled between us."

"You give me the hundred thousand florins as a marriage-portion, do you not?"

"Yes."

"Upon condition that I marry a man whom I love?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, Mynheer, this money cannot belong to me. I shall never love any one; neither shall I marry."

Having with difficulty uttered these words, Rosa sank upon her knees and almost swooned in the violence of her grief.

Cornelius, frightened at seeing her so pale and lifeless, was about to take her in his arms, when a heavy step, accompanied by other ominous sounds, was heard on the staircase, amid the continued barking of the dog.

"They are coming to take you away! Oh, God! Oh, God!" cried Rosa, wringing her hands. "Have you nothing more to tell me?"

Again she fell on her knees, with her face buried in her

hands, weeping copiously, and sobbing as if her heart would break.

"I have only to say that I wish you to preserve these bulbs as a most precious treasure, and carefully to treat them according to the directions I have given you, and for love of me. And now, farewell, Rosa."

"Yes, yes," she said, without raising her head; "oh, yes, I will do anything you bid me — except marrying," she added in a low voice, "for that, oh, indeed! that is impossible for me."

She then hid Cornelius's cherished treasure in her bosom.

The noise on the staircase which Cornelius and Rosa had heard was caused by the Recorder, who was coming for the prisoner, followed by the executioner, by the soldiers who were to form the guard round the scaffold, and by some curious hangers-on of the prison.

Cornelius, as free from weakness as from bravado, received them rather as friends than as persecutors, and quietly submitted to all the conditions which these men in the performance of their duty saw fit to impose.

Then casting a glance into the square through his narrow iron-barred window, he perceived the scaffold, and twenty paces from it the gibbet, from which, by order of the Stadtholder, the outraged remains of the two brothers De Witt had been taken down.

When the moment came to follow the guards down to the square, Cornelius sought with his eyes Rosa's angelic face; but he saw, behind the swords and halberds, only a form lying outstretched near a wooden bench, and a death-like face half covered with long golden locks.

But as she fell senseless, Rosa, still true to her friend's behest, had pressed her hand on her velvet bodice, and even in her unconsciousness instinctively grasped the precious package which Cornelius had intrusted to her care.

Leaving the cell, the young man could still see in the convulsively-clenched fingers of Rosa the yellowish leaf from that Bible on which Cornelius de Witt had with such difficulty and pain written those few lines, which, if Van Baerle had read them, would undoubtedly have been the salvation of a man and a tulip.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EXECUTION.

Cornelius had not three hundred paces to walk outside the prison to reach the foot of the scaffold. At the bottom of the staircase the dog quietly looked at him while he was passing. Cornelius even fancied he saw in the animal's eyes a certain expression which was almost compassion.

The dog, perhaps, knew by instinct the condemned prisoners, and reserved his teeth for those who left as free men.

The shorter the way from the door of the prison to the foot of the scaffold the more thickly, of course, the curiosity-seekers were crowded together.

They were the same people who, not satisfied with the blood which they had shed three days before, were now craving for a new victim.

Therefore Cornelius had scarcely made his appearance when a fierce roar ran through the whole street, spreading all over the square, and re-echoing from the streets which led to the scaffold, and which were likewise crowded with spectators.

The scaffold indeed resembled an islet at the confluence of several rivers.

In the midst of these threats and groans and yells, Cornelius, undoubtedly so that he might not hear them, was utterly self-absorbed.

What thoughts occupied the mind of this just man, whom death was staring in the face?

They were not of his enemies nor of his judges nor of his executioners.

He was thinking of the beautiful tulips which he would see from his lofty abode on high, at Ceylon, or Bengal, or elsewhere, when seated among the pure of heart at the right hand of the Almighty he might look down with pity on this earth, where John and Cornelius de Witt had been murdered for having thought too much of politics, and where Cornelius van Baerle was about to meet with a like fate for having been too much devoted to tulips.

"It is only one stroke of the axe," said the philosopher to himself, "and my beautiful dream will begin to be realized."

But there was still a doubt whether, as in the case of M. de Chalais, M. de Thou, and other people who had been put to death by bunglers, the headsman might not have to inflict more than one stroke, — that is to say, more than one martyrdom, — on the poor tulip-fancier.

Yet Van Baerle mounted the steps of his scaffold none the less resolutely.

As he mounted them he was conscious of a feeling of pride, whatever might befall, of having been the friend of the illustrious John, and godson of the noble-hearted Cornelius, whom the very ruffians who were now crowding to witness his doom had torn to pieces and burned three days before.

He knelt down, prayed fervently, and noticed, not without a feeling of sincere joy, that as he lay his head on the block, if he kept his eyes open, he would be able to the last to see the grated window of the Buytenhof.

At length the fatal moment arrived, and Cornelius placed his chin on the cold, damp block; but as he did so, his eyes closed involuntarily, in order that he might receive more resolutely the terrible stroke which was about to fall on his head and blot out his life.

A ray of light fell upon the planking of the scaffold as the executioner raised his sword.

Van Baerle bade farewell to the great black tulip, certain of awaking with thanks to God upon his lips in another world filled with a more glorious and brighter-hued radiance.

Three times he felt with a shudder a cold current of air as the knife passed over his neck; but to his surprise he felt neither pain nor shock.

He saw no change in the appearance of the clouds.

Then suddenly Van Baerle felt gentle hands raising him, without knowing whose they were, and soon stood on his feet again, although trembling a little.

He opened his eyes. Some one by his side was reading from a huge parchment, sealed with a huge seal of red wax.

And the same sun, yellow and pale, as it behooves a Dutch sun to be, was shining in the skies; and the same grated window looked down upon him from the Buytenhof, and the same rabble, no longer yelling but completely thunderstruck, were staring up at him from all sides of the square.

By dint of keeping his eyes open and looking and listening, Van Baerle began to understand what it all meant.

The fact was that Monseigneur, William Prince of Orange, afraid without doubt that the seventeen pounds

of blood, lacking a few ounces, which Van Baerle had in his body, might cause the cup of divine justice to overflow, had compassionately taken into consideration his good character and the apparent proofs of his innocence. His Highness, accordingly, had granted him his life.

That is why the sword, which had been raised with sinister intent, had circled three times above his head, as the bird of ill omen did above that of Turnus, but had not descended, and had left his vertebræ intact.

That is why he had felt no pain and no shock; and for the same reason, the sun was still smiling upon him from the blue — rather a dingy shade, to be sure, but still very agreeable — blue vault of heaven.

Cornelius, who had rather hoped that he was to see the Lord, and to enjoy a panoramic view of all the tulip-bearing universe, was a little disappointed; but he comforted himself somewhat with the pleasure he experienced in exercising the muscles of that part of the body which the Greeks called the τράχηλος, but to which we French have given the name of "le col" (the neck).

Cornelius at first hoped that the pardon would be complete, and that he would be restored to full liberty and to his flower-beds at Dort.

But Cornelius was mistaken. To use an expression of Madame de Sévigné, who wrote about the same time, "There was a postscript to the letter;" and the most important part of the letter was contained in the postscript.

By this postscript, William of Orange, Stadtholder of Holland, condemned Cornelius van Baerle to imprisonment for life. He was not sufficiently guilty to

suffer death, but he was too much so to be set at liberty.

Cornelius listened to the reading of the postscript; but the first feeling of vexation and disappointment over, he said to himself, —

"Never mind, all is not lost; this perpetual imprisonment has its alleviations. I shall have Rosa, and I shall also have my three bulbs of the black tulip."

But Cornelius forgot that the Seven Provinces had seven prisons, one for each province; and that the board of the prisoners is less expensive anywhere else than at the Hague, which is a capital.

His Highness William, who apparently could not afford to feed Van Baerle at the Hague, sent him to undergo his perpetual imprisonment at the fortress of Lœwestein, very near Dort, but, alas! also very far from it; for Lœwestein, as the geographers tell us, is situated at the point of the islet which is formed by the confluence of the Waal and the Meuse, opposite Gorcum.

Van Baerle was sufficiently versed in the history of his country to know that the celebrated Grotius was confined in that castle, after the death of Barneveldt; and that the States, in their generosity to the illustrious publicist, jurist, historian, poet, and divine, had granted to him for his daily maintenance the sum of twenty-four Dutch sous.

"I," said Baerle to himself, "who am worth much less than Grotius, shall be fortunate if I get twelve sous, and I shall live miserably; but never mind, — at all events, I shall be alive."

Then suddenly a terrible thought struck him.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "how damp and cloudy that

part of the country is; and the soil is bad for the tulips!"

Then he muttered to himself, as he let his head, which had come so near falling much farther, fall upon his chest, —

"And then there's Rosa; she will not be at Lœwestein."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### WHAT WAS GOING ON ALL THIS TIME IN THE MIND OF ONE OF THE SPECTATORS.

WHILE Cornelius was reflecting upon his fate, a coach had driven up to the scaffold. This vehicle was for the prisoner. He was invited to enter it, and he obeyed.

His last look was towards the Buytenhof. He hoped to see at the window Rosa's face with an expression of satisfaction upon it; but the coach was drawn by good horses, who soon carried Van Baerle away from the shouts which the populace indulged in in honor of the most magnanimous Stadtholder, intermingled with a spice of abuse against the brothers De Witt and the godson of Cornelius, who had just been snatched from the jaws of death.

This reprieve suggested to the worthy spectators remarks such as the following: —

"It 's very fortunate that we used such speed in having justice done to that great villain John and to that little rogue Cornelius; otherwise his Highness's soft heart would certainly have cheated us out of our vengeance upon them as well as upon this fellow."

Among all the spectators whom Van Baerle's execution had attracted to the Buytenhof, and whom the sudden turn of affairs had disagreeably surprised, beyond question the most disappointed was a certain respectably-

dressed burgher, who from early morning had made such a good use of his feet and elbows that he at last was separated from the scaffold only by the file of soldiers who surrounded the instrument of punishment.

Many had shown themselves eager to see the "perfidious" blood of the guilty Cornelius flow, but not one had expressed his eagerness with such a show of implacable vindictiveness as the individual in question.

The most furious had come to the Buytenhof at daybreak to secure a better place; but he, outdoing even them, had passed the night at the door of the prison, and thence, as we have already said, he had made his way to the very foremost rank, *unguibus et rostro;* that is to say, coaxing some and pushing others.

When the executioner had brought the prisoner to the scaffold, the burgher who had mounted on the capstone of the fountain, the better to see and be seen, made the executioner a sign, as much as to say, —

"It 's a bargain, is n't it?"

The executioner answered by another sign, which implied, —

"Never fear, it 's all right."

Who was this burgher who seemed on such terms of mutual understanding with the executioner, and what was the significance of this interchange of gestures?

Nothing could be more easily explained; it was no other than Mynheer Isaac Boxtel, who after the arrest of Cornelius had come to the Hague to see if he could not get hold of the three bulbs of the black tulip.

Boxtel had at first tried to bring over Gryphus to his interest; but he was a very bulldog for fidelity to his trust, and proneness to suspicion, and snarling manners.

He had therefore bristled up at the hatred expressed by Boxtel, whom he suspected to be a warm friend of the prisoner, making trifling inquiries, to contrive with the more certainty some means of escape for him.

Thus to the very first proposals which Boxtel made to Gryphus to filch the bulbs, which Cornelius probably had concealed in his breast or in some corner of his cell, Gryphus's sole reply was to show him the door, whither he was attended by the dog of the stairway with caressing touches.

Boxtel was not discouraged merely because he had left a piece of his trousers in the mastiff's mouth. He returned to the charge, but this time Gryphus was in his bed, feverish, and with a broken arm. He therefore did not himself admit his solicitor, who then addressed himself to Rosa, offering her a head-dress of pure gold in exchange for the three bulbs. Whereupon the noble girl, who then had no idea of the value of the object which she was requested to steal, and for which she was to be so well paid, had advised the tempter to apply to the executioner, he being the final judge as well as the last heir of the condemned man.

This repulse suggested a new scheme to Boxtel.

Meanwhile the sentence had been pronounced, and was to be speedily executed, as we have seen. Thus Isaac had no more time to bribe any one. He therefore seized upon the idea which Rosa had suggested; he went to the executioner.

Isaac had not the least doubt but that Cornelius would die with his bulbs next his heart.

But there were two things which Boxtel did not calculate upon.

Rosa, — that is to say, love ; and

William of Orange, — that is to say, clemency.

But for Rosa and William the calculations of the envious wretch were correct.

But for William, Cornelius would have died.

But for Rosa, Cornelius would have died with his bulbs next his heart.

Mynheer Boxtel went to the headsman, to whom he gave himself out as a great friend of the condemned man, and bought from him all the effects, save the gold and silver trinkets of the dead man that was to be, for the rather exorbitant sum of one hundred florins.

But what were a paltry hundred florins to a man who was all but sure to buy with them the prize of the Harlem Society ?

It was money lent at the rate of a thousand for one, which, as nobody will deny, was a very satisfactory investment.

The headsman, on the other hand, had scarcely anything to do to earn his hundred florins. He needed only, as soon as the execution was over, to allow Mynheer Boxtel to ascend the scaffold with his servants to remove the inanimate remains of his friend.

It was a very common thing for faithful servitors to do when one of their masters died a public death in the Buytenhof square.

A fanatic like Cornelius might very well have for a friend another fanatic who would give a hundred florins for his effects.

Therefore the executioner readily acquiesced in the proposal, insisting upon only one condition, — that he should be paid in advance.

Boxtel, like the people who enter a show at a fair, might not be pleased, and refuse to pay on going out.

Boxtel paid in advance, and waited.

After this the reader may imagine how excited Boxtel was; with what anxiety he watched the guards, the Recorder, and the executioner; and with what intense interest he surveyed the movements of Van Baerle. How would he place himself on the block; how would he fall; and would he not, in falling, crush those priceless bulbs? Had he not at least taken care to inclose them in a golden box, — for gold is the hardest of all metals?

We will not attempt to describe the effect produced upon this worthy individual by the delays interposed to the execution of the sentence. Why did that stupid executioner thus waste his time brandishing his sword over the head of Cornelius, instead of cutting that head off? But when he saw the Recorder take the hand of the condemned and lift him, as he drew the parchment from his pocket; when he heard the pardon granted by the Stadtholder publicly read out, — then Boxtel was no longer a human being. The rage of the tiger, of the hyena, and of the serpent glistened in his eyes, and vented itself in his yell and his movements. Had he been within reach of Van Baerle, he would have pounced upon him and killed him.

And so, then, Cornelius was to live, and was to go to Lœwestein; and he would take his bulbs to his prison with him; and perhaps he would find some garden where the black tulip would flower for him!

There are certain calamities which the pen of a writer, who is but human, is powerless to describe, but which he must leave to his readers' imagination, contenting himself with a bare statement of the facts.

Boxtel, almost fainting, fell from the stone upon some Orangemen who, like him, were sorely vexed at the turn which affairs had taken. They, mistaking the frantic cries of Mynheer Isaac for demonstrations of joy, began to belabor him with kicks and cuffs, such as could not have been administered in better style on the other side of the Channel.

But what could a few blows of the fist add to such suffering as Boxtel underwent?

He wanted to run after the coach which was carrying away Cornelius with his bulbs. But in his hurry he overlooked a paving-stone in his way, stumbled, lost his centre of gravity, rolled over to a distance of some yards, and only rose again, bruised and begrimed, after the whole rabble of the Hague with their muddy feet had passed over him.

Thus poor Boxtel, who was in hard luck that day, added torn clothes, a broken back, and scratched hands to his other woes.

One might have thought that this was enough for one day; but, no! Mynheer Boxtel, once more on his feet, proceeded to tear out all of his hair that would come out, as a sacrifice to the insane, senseless divinity called Envy, — a grateful offering, without doubt, to the goddess, who, as mythology teaches us, wears a head-dress of serpents.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE PIGEONS OF DORT.

It was, indeed, in itself a great honor for Cornelius van Baerle to be confined in the same prison which had once received the learned Grotius.

But when he arrived at the prison he found that a still more distinguished honor was in store for him. It so happened that the very cell which had been occupied by Olden-Barneveldt's illustrious disciple at Lœwestein was vacant when Van Baerle the tulip-fancier was sent there by the clemency of the Prince of Orange.

The cell had a very bad character at the castle, because Grotius, thanks to his wife's fertile brain, had escaped from it in that famous book-chest, which his guards omitted to examine.

On the other hand, it seemed to Van Baerle an auspicious omen that this cell was assigned to him; for according to his ideas a jailer ought never to give to a second pigeon the cage from which a former occupant has so easily flown away.

The cell is historical. We will not waste time by giving a detailed description of it here, save to say that there was an alcove in it, which had been used by Madame Grotius. It differed in no respect from the other cells of the prison, except that, perhaps, it was a little higher, and had a splendid view from the grated window.

Moreover, the purpose of this tale is not to describe interiors. In Van Baerle's eyes life was something beyond the mere act of breathing. Over and above his bodily machine he loved two things, which he could hereafter enjoy only in imagination, the gift of that indefatigable traveller thought, —

A flower, and a woman; both of them, as he conceived, lost to him forever.

Fortunately, honest Van Baerle was mistaken. God, who had had his eyes upon him with the smile of a loving father when he was walking to the scaffold, God had destined him to lead even in his prison-cell, the former abode of Grotius, the most adventurous life which ever fell to the lot of a tulip-fancier.

One morning, while he stood at his window inhaling the fresh air which came from the Waal, and gazing longingly from afar at the windmills of his native Dort, which could be seen in the distance behind a forest of chimneys, he saw flocks of pigeons come from that quarter, and perch fluttering in the sunlight on the pointed gables of Lœwestein.

"These pigeons," Van Baerle said to himself, "have come from Dort, and consequently may return there. By fastening a little note to the wing of one of them I might have a chance to send a message to Dort, where my friends are grieving for me."

Then, after a few moments' consideration, he exclaimed, "I will do it."

Patience comes very easy to a man of twenty-eight who is condemned to imprisonment for life; that is to say, to something like twenty-two or twenty-three thousand days of captivity.

Van Baerle, still thinking of the three bulbs, — for that thought was continually knocking at the door of his memory, as the heart beats in the breast, — made a snare for catching the pigeons. He tempted the flighty creatures with all the resources afforded him by his kitchen, which cost eighteen Dutch sous (twelve French) per day; and after a month of unsuccessful attempts, he at last caught a female bird.

It cost him two more months to catch a male bird; he then shut them up together, and having about the beginning of the year 1673 obtained some eggs from them, he released the female, which, leaving the male behind to hatch the eggs in her stead, flew joyously to Dort with a note under her wing.

She returned in the evening. She still had the note.

Thus it went on for fifteen days, while Van Baerle's first feeling of bitter disappointment changed to utter despair.

On the sixteenth day, at last, the bird came back without it.

Van Baerle had addressed it to his nurse, the old Frisian woman; and implored any charitable soul who might find it, to convey it to her as safely and speedily as possible.

In this letter addressed to the nurse there was a little enclosure for Rosa.

God, who with a single breath scatters the grain upon the walls of time-worn castles, and fertilizes it there with a drop of rain, decreed in his infinite goodness that Van Baerle's nurse should receive the letter.

This is how it came about.

When he left Dort for the Hague, and the Hague for

Gorcum, Mynheer Isaac Boxtel had abandoned not only his house, his servant, his observatory, and his telescope, but his pigeons as well.

The servant, having been left without wages, began by living on his little savings, and then resorted to his master's pigeons.

Seeing this, the pigeons emigrated from the roof of Isaac Boxtel to that of Cornelius van Baerle.

The nurse was a kind-hearted woman, who could not live without having something to love. She conceived an affection for the pigeons, which had thrown themselves on her hospitality; and when Boxtel's servant reclaimed them, with the idea of eating the last twelve or fifteen, as he had already done with the others, she offered to buy them from him at six Dutch sous each.

This being just double their value, the man was very glad to close the bargain, and the nurse found herself in undisputed possession of the pigeons of her master's envious neighbor.

These pigeons with others, in the course of their wanderings, visited the Hague, Lœwestein, and Rotterdam, seeking variety, doubtless, in the flavor of their wheat or hemp seed.

Chance, or rather God, for we can see the hand of God in everything, had willed that Cornelius van Baerle should happen to hit upon one of these very pigeons.

It follows that if the envious fellow had not left Dort to follow his rival to the Hague in the first place, and then to Gorcum or to Lœwestein, — for the two places are separated only by the confluence of the Waal and the Meuse, — Van Baerle's letter would have fallen into his hands and not the nurse's; in which event the poor

prisoner, like the raven of the Roman cobbler, would have thrown away his time and his trouble, and instead of having to relate the series of exciting events which are about to flow from beneath our pen like the varied hues of a many-colored tapestry, we should have nought to describe but a weary waste of days, dull and melancholy and gloomy as night's dark mantle.

We have followed the note into the hands of Van Baerle's nurse.

So it happened that on one of the early days of February, just as the first shades of night were falling from heaven, leaving the stars twinkling above them, Cornelius heard on the staircase of the tower a voice which made him start.

He put his hand to his heart and listened.

It was the sweet melodious voice of Rosa.

Let us confess it: Cornelius was not so stupefied with surprise, or so beside himself with joy, as he would have been but for the pigeon, which in answer to his letter had brought back hope to him under her empty wing; and knowing Rosa, he expected every day, if the note had ever reached her, to have news of his love and of his bulbs.

He rose, listened once more, and bent toward the door.

Yes, they were indeed the accents which had fallen so sweetly on his heart at the Hague.

The question now was, whether Rosa, who had made the journey from the Hague to Lœwestein, and who — Cornelius did not understand how — had succeeded even in penetrating into the prison, would have as good success in making her way to the prisoner himself.

While Cornelius, debating this point within himself, was building all sorts of castles in the air, and was struggling between hope and fear, the shutter of the wicket in the door opened, and Rosa, with delight expressed in her beaming eyes as well as in every detail of her costume, and more beautiful than ever from the grief which for the last five months had blanched her cheeks, pressed her face against the wire grating of the window, saying to him, "Oh, Mynheer, Mynheer! here I am!"

Cornelius stretched out his arms, and raised his eyes heavenward, with a cry of joy.

"Oh, Rosa, Rosa!"

"Hush! let us speak low; my father is close behind," said the girl.

"Your father?"

"Yes, he is in the courtyard at the bottom of the staircase, receiving the instructions of the Governor; he will come up very soon."

"The instructions of the Governor?"

"Listen to me, I'll try to tell you all about it in a few words: The Stadtholder has a country-house about a league from Leyden, — a large dairy, nothing more, — and my aunt, who was his nurse, has charge of all the cattle kept there. As soon as I received your letter, which, alas! I could not read myself, but which your nurse read to me, I hastened to my aunt. There I remained until the Prince came to visit the dairy; and when he came, I asked him to allow my father to exchange his post as head turnkey at the prison of the Hague for that of jailer of the fortress of Lœwestein. The Prince did not suspect my object; had he known it he might have refused my request, but as it is, he granted it."

"So you are here?"

"As you see."

"And I shall see you every day?"

"As often as I can manage it."

"Oh, Rosa, my beautiful Rosa, do you care for me a little, then?"

"A little?" she said; "you don't ask for enough, Mynheer Cornelius."

Cornelius, with a passionate gesture, held out his hands towards her, but they were only able to touch each other with the tips of their fingers through the bars.

"Here is my father," said Rosa.

She abruptly drew back from the door, and ran to meet old Gryphus, who made his appearance at the top of the staircase.

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LITTLE GRATED WINDOW.

Gryphus was followed by the mastiff.

He took the animal on his round through the jail, so that, in case of need, he might recognize the prisoners.

"Father," said Rosa, "here is the famous cell from which Mynheer Grotius escaped. You know of Mynheer Grotius?"

"Oh, yes, that rascal Grotius; a friend of that villain Barneveldt, whom I saw executed when I was a child. Aha! Grotius, indeed! And so that's the cell from which he escaped. Well, I'll answer for it that no one shall follow his example."

And opening the door, he began to talk to the prisoner in the darkness.

The dog, on his part, went up to the prisoner, and growled, and snuffed at his legs, as if to ask him what right he had still to be alive, after he had seen him leave the prison between the recorder and the executioner.

But the fair Rosa called him to her side.

"Well, Mynheer," said Gryphus, holding up his lantern to throw a little light around, "you see in me your new jailer. I am head turnkey, and have all the cells under my care. I'm not ill-tempered, but I'm not to be trifled with as far as discipline goes."

"My good Master Gryphus, I know you perfectly

well," said the prisoner, entering the circle of light cast by the lantern.

"Holloa! it 's you, is it, Mynheer van Baerle?" said Gryphus. "It 's you, is it? Well, well, well, what a small place the world is!"

"Yes, and it 's really a great pleasure to me, good Master Gryphus, to see that your arm must be getting well, for you are able to hold your lantern with it."

Gryphus frowned.

"That 's just the way," he said; "people always make blunders in politics. His Highness has granted you your life; I 'm sure I should never have done so."

"Pshaw!" replied Cornelius, "why not?"

"Because you are the very man to begin conspiring again. You learned people have dealings with the devil."

"Nonsense, Master Gryphus. Are you dissatisfied with the manner in which I set your arm, or with the price I asked you?" said Cornelius, laughing.

"Quite the contrary, by my faith! quite the contrary!" growled the jailer; "you set it only too well. There is some witchcraft in this. After six weeks I was able to use it as if nothing had happened; so much so, that the doctor of the Buytenhof, who knows his trade well, wanted to break it again, to set it in the regular way, and promised me that I should go three months without being able to move it."

"And you did not like that?"

"I said, 'Nay, as long as I can make the sign of the cross with that arm' (Gryphus was a Roman Catholic), 'I laugh at the devil.'"

"But if you laugh at the devil, Master Gryphus, you *ought* with so much more reason to laugh at scholars."

"Oh, you scholars, you scholars!" cried Gryphus, without noticing the implied question; "you scholars! Why, I would rather have to guard ten soldiers than one scholar. The soldiers smoke, guzzle, and get drunk; they are as gentle as lambs if you only give them brandy or Moselle; but for a scholar to drink, smoke, and get tipsy, ah, no! They keep sober, for in that way they spend nothing, and have their heads always clear to conspire. But I tell you, at the very outset, it won't be such an easy matter for you to conspire here. In the first place, no books, no papers, and no conjuring book. It 's books that helped Mynheer Grotius to get off."

"I assure you, Master Gryphus," replied Van Baerle, "that although I may have for a moment entertained the idea of escaping, I most decidedly have no such idea now."

"All right," said Gryphus, "all right! Just keep a sharp watch over yourself, and I will do the same. But, for all that, I say his Highness has made a great mistake."

"Not to have cut off my head? Thank you, Master Gryphus."

"To be sure; just see how quiet the Mynheers de Witt keep now."

"What you say now, Master Gryphus, is very horrible!" cried Van Baerle, turning away his head to conceal his disgust. "You forget that one of those unfortunate gentlemen was my friend, and that the other was my second father."

"Yes, but I also remember that both were conspirators. And, moreover, I am speaking philanthropically."

"Oh, indeed! explain that a little to me, my good Master Gryphus, for I do not quite understand it."

"Well, then, if you had remained on the block of Master Harbruck — "

"Well?"

"You would now be done with suffering; whereas, I will not conceal from you that I shall lead you a sad life of it here."

"Thank you for the promise, Master Gryphus."

And while the prisoner smiled ironically at the old jailer, Rosa from behind the door replied with a smile full of sweet consolation.

Gryphus stepped toward the window.

It was still light enough to see the vast expanse of the horizon, indistinctly merged in a gray haze.

"What view has one from here?" asked Gryphus.

"Why, a very fine one," said Cornelius, with a glance at Rosa.

"Yes, yes, too much of a view, too much."

And at this moment the two pigeons, frightened by the sight, and especially by the voice of the stranger, left their nest, and disappeared in the evening mist.

"Halloa! what 's this?" cried Gryphus.

"My pigeons," answered Cornelius.

"My pigeons!" echoed the jailer, "my pigeons! Has a prisoner anything of his own?"

"Why, then," said Cornelius, "the pigeons which a merciful Father in Heaven has lent to me."

"So here we have a breach of the rules already," replied Gryphus. "Pigeons! ah, young man, young man, I 'll tell you one thing, that before to-morrow is over your pigeons will boil in my pot."

"First of all you must catch them, Master Gryphus. You won't allow these pigeons to be mine? Well, I vow *they are even* less yours than mine."

"What is postponed is not abandoned," growled the jailer, "and I shall certainly wring their necks before twenty-four hours are over."

As he gave utterance to this ill-natured promise, Gryphus put his head out of the window to examine the nest. This gave Van Baerle time to run to the door, and squeeze the hand of Rosa, who whispered to him, —

"At nine o'clock this evening."

Gryphus, quite taken up with the desire of catching the pigeons next day, as he had promised he would do, saw and heard nothing of this; and having closed the window he took the arm of his daughter, left the cell, turned the key twice, drew the bolts, and went off to make the same kind promises to the other prisoners.

He was scarcely out of sight, when Cornelius went to the door to listen to the sound of his footsteps, and as soon as they had died away he ran to the window, and completely demolished the nest of the pigeons.

He preferred to banish forever from his presence the gentle messengers to whom he owed the happiness of his reunion with Rosa, rather than to expose them to danger of death.

This visit of the jailer, his brutal threats, and the gloomy prospect of his administration, from which he knew what to expect, — all this failed to distract Cornelius from his cheerful thoughts, and especially the sweet hope which the presence of Rosa had re-awakened in his heart.

He waited eagerly to hear the clock of the tower of Lœwestein strike nine.

Rosa had said, —

"At nine, expect me."

The last stroke was still vibrating through the air, when Cornelius heard on the staircase the light step and the rustle of the flowing dress of the fair Frisian maid, and soon after, a light appeared at the little wicket in the door, on which the prisoner fixed his earnest gaze.

The shutter was opened from the outside.

"Here I am," said Rosa, out of breath from running up the stairs; "here I am."

"Oh, my good Rosa!"

"Are you glad to see me?"

"Can you ask? But how did you contrive to get here? Tell me."

"Well, listen. My father falls asleep every evening, almost immediately after his supper; I then make him lie down, for he is a little stupefied with his gin. Don't say anything about it, because, thanks to this nap, I shall be able to come every evening and talk for an hour with you."

"Oh, I thank you Rosa, dear Rosa."

As he spoke, Cornelius put his face so near the little window that Rosa withdrew hers.

"I have brought you your bulbs," said she.

Cornelius's heart leaped with joy. He had not yet dared to ask Rosa what she had done with the precious treasure which he had entrusted to her.

"Oh, you have preserved them, then?"

"Did you not give them to me as a thing which was dear to you?"

"Yes; but as I did give them to you, it seems to me that they belong to you."

"They would have belonged to me after your death;

but, fortunately, you are alive now. Oh, how I blessed his Highness in my heart! If God grants Prince William all the happiness that I have wished him, certainly King William will be the happiest man not only in his kingdom, but in all the world. You were living, I said to myself; and while I kept the Bible of your godfather Cornelius, I was resolved to bring you your bulbs, only I did not know how to accomplish it. So I had already formed the plan of going to the Stadtholder to ask from him my father's appointment as jailer at Lœwestein when your nurse brought me your letter. Oh, we shed many tears together, I assure you. But your letter only confirmed me the more in my resolution. I then left for Leyden, and the rest you know."

"What! my dear Rosa, you thought, even before receiving my letter, of coming to be near me again?"

"Did I think of it?" said Rosa, allowing her love to get the better of her bashfulness; "indeed I thought of nothing else."

As she said this, Rosa looked so exceedingly beautiful that for the second time Cornelius placed his forehead and lips against the bars, with the laudable purpose, doubtless, of thanking the young lady.

Rosa, however, drew back as before.

"In truth," she said, with that coquetry which somehow or other is in the heart of every young girl, "in truth I have often been sorry that I am not able to read, but never so much so, or in exactly the same way, as when your nurse brought me your letter. I kept the paper in my hands, which spoke to other people, but was dumb for me, poor fool that I am."

"So you have often regretted not being able to read?" said Cornelius. "On what occasions, pray?"

"Faith," said she, laughing, "to read all the letters which have been written to me."

"Oh, you receive letters, Rosa, do you?"

"By hundreds!"

"But who ever wrote to you?"

"Who? Why, in the first place, all the students who passed over the Buytenhof Square; all the officers who went to parade; all the clerks, and even the merchants who used to see me at my little window."

"And what did you do with all these notes, my dear Rosa?"

"Formerly," she answered, "I got some friend to read them to me, which was capital fun; but since a certain time — well, what use was it to listen to such nonsense? — since a certain time I have burnt them."

"Since a certain time!" exclaimed Cornelius, with a look in which love and joy were both beaming.

Rosa, blushing, lowered her eyes, so that she did not observe Cornelius's lips approaching, and, alas! they only met the cold grating. Yet, in spite of this obstacle, they communicated to the lips of the young girl the glowing breath of the most tender kiss.

At this hot breath, which seemed to burn her lips, Rosa grew as pale, perhaps even paler than she had been at the Buytenhof on the day of the execution. She uttered a plaintive sob, closed her fine eyes, and fled, trying in vain to still the beating of her heart. Cornelius, again alone, could do naught but inhale the sweet perfume left by her hair on the cruel bars.

Rosa had fled so precipitately that she completely forgot to return to Cornelius the three bulbs of the black tulip.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### MASTER AND PUPIL.

THE worthy Gryphus, as the reader must have seen, was far from sharing the kindly feelings of his daughter for the godson of Cornelius de Witt.

As there were only five prisoners at Lœwestein, the duty of watching them was not a very onerous one, and the post was a sort of sinecure, bestowed upon him in consideration of his age.

But the worthy jailer in his zeal had magnified, with all the power of his imagination, the importance of the task imposed upon him. In his eyes, Cornelius assumed the gigantic proportions of a criminal of the first order. He looked upon him, therefore, as the most dangerous of all his prisoners. He watched his every movement, and always approached him with a vinegary expression, punishing him for what he called his dreadful rebellion against the kind-hearted Stadtholder.

Three times a day he entered Van Baerle's cell, expecting to detect him in some breach of the rules; but Cornelius had renounced letter-writing since his fair correspondent was at hand. It is even probable that if Cornelius had obtained his full liberty, with permission to go wherever he liked, the prison, *with* Rosa and his bulbs, would have appeared to him preferable to any other habitation in the world, without Rosa and his bulbs.

Rosa, in fact, had promised to come and talk with her dear captive at nine o'clock every evening, and on the first evening she kept her word as we have seen.

On the following evening she went up as before, with the same mysteriousness and the same precaution. But she had resolved, in her own mind, not to put her face too near the grating. In order, however, to engage Van Baerle at once in a conversation which would seriously occupy his attention, she began by passing to him through the grating the three bulbs, which were still wrapped up in the same paper.

But to the great astonishment of Rosa, Van Baerle pushed back her white hand with the tips of his fingers.

The young man had been considering what he should do.

"Listen," he said. "I think we should risk too much by putting all our eggs in one basket. Remember, my dear Rosa, that what we have to do is to accomplish something which until now has been considered impossible. We are to make the great black tulip flower. Let us, therefore, take every possible precaution, so that, in case of a failure, we may not have anything to reproach ourselves with. This is what I have thought would be the surest way for us to succeed."

Rosa listened eagerly to what the prisoner went on to say, much more on account of the importance which the unfortunate tulip-fancier attached to it than from any conviction of her own as to its importance.

"This is the way," Cornelius continued, "in which I have thought we could best work together in this matter."

"I am listening," said Rosa.

"There ought to be a little garden connected with the fortress, or if not a garden, a courtyard; or if neither garden nor courtyard, surely something in the way of a terrace."

"We have a very fine garden," said Rosa; "it runs along the bank of the Waal, and is full of fine old trees."

"Could you bring me a little soil from the garden, dear Rosa, so that I may examine it?"

"I will do so to-morrow."

"Take some from a sunny and some from a shady spot, so that I may judge of its properties in a dry and in a moist state."

"Rest assured I will do as you wish."

"After I have selected the soil, and, if necessary, modified it, we will divide our three bulbs; you will take one and plant it, on the day that I tell you, in the soil I have selected. It is sure to flower, if you tend it according to my directions."

"I will not lose sight of it for a minute."

"You will give me another, which I will try to grow here in my cell, and which will help me to beguile those long, weary hours when I cannot see you. I confess that I have very little hope of the last, and by anticipation, I regard the unfortunate bulb as sacrificed to my selfishness. However, the sun sometimes visits me. I will turn to account every possible bit of artificial heat, even that from my pipe and its hot ashes; and lastly, we, or rather you, will keep in reserve the third bulb, as our last resource, in case our first two experiments should result in failure. In this manner, my dear Rosa, it is impossible that we should not succeed in winning the hundred thousand florins for our dowry, and in tasting the supreme delight of seeing our labors crowned with success."

"I understand," said Rosa. "I will bring you the soil to-morrow, and you shall select some for your bulb and for mine. As to yours, I shall have to make several trips for that, as I cannot bring much at a time."

"There is no hurry, dear Rosa; our tulips need not be put into the ground for a month at least. So you see we have plenty of time before us. Only I hope that in planting your bulb you will strictly follow all my instructions."

"I promise you I will."

"And when you have once planted it you will communicate to me all the circumstances which may interest our nursling; such as change of weather, footprints on the walks, or footprints on the beds. You will listen at night to ascertain if our garden is not resorted to by cats. A couple of the wretched beasts rooted up and laid waste two of my beds at Dort."

"I will listen."

"On moonlight nights — have you ever looked at your garden, my dear child?"

"The window of my sleeping-room overlooks it."

"Good! On moonlight nights you must look and see whether any rats come out from the holes in the wall. The rats are terrible fellows for gnawing whatever they come across; and I have heard unfortunate tulip-growers complain most bitterly of Noah for having put a couple of rats in the ark."

"I will observe, and if there are cats or rats — "

"You will tell me of it — that 's right. And, moreover," continued Van Baerle, in whom captivity had begotten distrust, "there is an animal much more to be feared than even the cat or the rat."

"What animal do you mean?"

"Man. You understand, my dear Rosa, that a man will steal a florin, and risk the galleys for such a trifle; and, consequently, it is much more likely that some one might steal a bulb worth a hundred thousand florins."

"No one ever enters the garden but myself."

"Can you answer for that?"

"I swear it."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear Rosa. Ah! all my pleasure comes from you."

And as the lips of Van Baerle approached the grating with the same ardor as the day before, and as, moreover, the hour had arrived for her to take her leave, Rosa drew back her head, and stretched out her hand.

In this pretty little hand, of which the coquettish damsel was particularly proud, was the bulb.

Cornelius kissed most tenderly the tips of the fingers of that hand. Was it because the hand still held one of the bulbs of the black tulip, or because it was Rosa's hand? We will leave this point to the decision of wiser heads than ours.

Rosa withdrew with the two other bulbs, pressing them to her heart.

Did she press them to her heart because they were the bulbs of the great black tulip, or because they came to her from Cornelius?

This point, we believe, might be more readily decided than the other.

However that may have been, from that moment life became sweet, and again full of interest to the prisoner.

Rosa, as we have seen, had handed him one of the bulbs.

Every evening she brought to him, handful by handful, a quantity of soil from that part of the garden which he had found to be the best, and which, indeed, was excellent.

A large jug, which Cornelius had skilfully broken to suit his purposes, made an excellent flower-pot. He half filled it, and mixed the earth which Rosa brought him with a little river-mud which he dried, — a mixture which formed a soil admirably adapted to his needs.

Then, at the beginning of April, he planted his first bulb.

We could never succeed in describing the pains and skilful strategy to which Cornelius resorted to conceal from Gryphus his delight with what he was doing. A half-hour is long enough for a philosophical prisoner to have a whole century full of thoughts and emotions.

Not a day passed on which Rosa did not come to have her chat with him.

The tulips, in the cultivation of which Rosa took a complete course, formed the principal topic of the conversation; but, interesting as the subject was, people cannot always talk about tulips.

So they began to talk about other things as well, and the tulip-fancier found out, to his great astonishment, what a vast range of subjects a conversation may comprise.

But Rosa had made it a rule to keep her pretty face six inches from the grating, for the beautiful girl had undoubtedly lost confidence in herself, since she had discovered how a prisoner's breath may set a maiden's heart on fire.

There was one thing especially which gave Cornelius

almost as much anxiety as his bulbs, — a subject to which he always returned, — the dependence of Rosa on her father.

On that account the very life of Van Baerle, the learned doctor of science, the picturesque artist, the man of genius, — of Van Baerle, who could in all probability claim to be the discoverer of that *chef d'œuvre* of creation which was to be called, in accordance with previous arrangement "Rosa Barlænsis," — the life, yes, more than the life, the happiness of this man, depended absolutely on the mere whim of another man; and that other man was a being of a lower order, and of the meanest capacity, — a jailer, rather less intelligent than the lock in which he turned the key, and harder than the bolt he drew. It resembled the episode of Caliban in the "Tempest," — a struggle betweeen a man and a brute.

However, Van Baerle's happiness was in his hands; he might some fine morning find Lœwestein dull, or the air of the place unhealthy, or the gin bad, and leave the fortress, and take his daughter with him, — when Cornelius and Rosa would again be separated.

God, who grows weary of doing too much for his creatures, might keep them apart forever.

"Of what use would the carrier-pigeons then be?" said Cornelius to Rosa; "for then, my dear Rosa, you would not be able to read what I should write to you, nor to write to me your thoughts in return."

"Well," answered Rosa, who in her heart was as much afraid of a separation as Cornelius himself, "we have an hour every evening; let us make the most of it."

"I don't think we make such a bad use of it, as it is."

"Let us employ it even better," said Rosa, smiling. "Teach me to read and to write; believe me, your lessons will not be thrown away, and in this way we shall never be separated any more, except by our own will!"

"Oh, then indeed we have eternity before us!" cried Cornelius.

Rosa smiled, and made a most charming gesture of dissent.

"Do you propose to remain forever in prison?" she retorted. "After sparing your life, do you suppose that his Highness will not also restore your liberty? And will you not then recover your fortune, and be a rich man? And then, when you are once more free and prosperous, will you still deign to look, as you pass on horseback or in your carriage, at poor Rosa, the jailer's daughter, which is next door to being the hangman's daughter?"

Cornelius tried to protest, and certainly he would have done so with all his heart, and with all the sincerity of a soul full of love.

The damsel, however, interrupted him, asking with a smile, "How is your tulip getting on?"

To speak to Cornelius of his tulip was a sure way of making him forget everything, even Rosa herself.

"Very well, indeed," he said. "The pellicle is growing black; the sprouting has commenced; the veins of the bulb are swelling; eight days hence, and perhaps sooner, we should be able to distinguish the presence of first buds. And yours, Rosa?"

"Oh, I have done things on a large scale, and according to your directions."

"Now, let me hear, Rosa, what you have done," said Cornelius, whose eyes glowed as eagerly and whose breath

came as quickly as on the evening when those eyes had burned their way into Rosa's thoughts, and that breath had left its mark upon her heart.

"Well," she said, smiling, for in truth she could not help studying this double love of the prisoner for herself and for the black tulip, "I have done things on a large scale. I have prepared a bed as you described it to me, on a clear spot, far from trees and walls, in a soil slightly mixed with sand, rather moist than dry, without a fragment of stone or pebble."

"Well done, Rosa! well done!"

"The soil thus made ready now awaits your pleasure. The first fine day you will tell me to plant my bulb, I will plant it; you know that I must do my planting much later than you, as I have in my favor all the chances of fresh air, of the sun, and abundance of moisture."

"True, very true," exclaimed Cornelius, clapping his hands with joy. "You are a good pupil, Rosa, and you are sure to win your hundred thousand florins."

"Don't forget," said Rosa, gayly, "that your pupil, as you call me, has still other things to learn besides the cultivation of tulips."

"Yes, yes; and I am as anxious as you are, Rosa, that you should learn to read."

"When shall we begin?"

"At once."

"No, to-morrow."

"Why to-morrow?"

"Because to-day our hour has expired, and I must leave you."

"Already? But what shall we read?"

"Oh," said Rosa, "I have a book, — a book which I hope will bring us good fortune."

"To-morrow, then."

"Yes, to-morrow."

On the following evening Rosa returned with Cornelius de Witt's Bible.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE FIRST BULB.

On the following evening, as we have said, Rosa returned with Cornelius de Witt's Bible.

Then began between the master and the pupil one of those charming scenes which are the delight of the novelist, when he can find an opportunity, in the course of his story, to describe them.

The grated wicket, the only opening through which the two lovers were able to communicate, was too high for these good people — who had until then been content to read all that they had to say in each other's eyes — to read conveniently from the book Rosa had brought.

Therefore she had to lean against the grating, holding the book on a level with the taper which she held in her right hand, but which Cornelius luckily thought of fastening to the bars with a handkerchief, so as to afford her a little rest. Rosa was then able to follow with her finger the letters and syllables, which Cornelius made her spell out, while he with a straw pointed out the letters to his attentive pupil through the holes of the grating.

The light of the lamp gave new brilliancy to Rosa's rich coloring, to the sparkle of her deep blue eyes, and to the wealth of fair hair beneath her head-dress of polished gold, which the Frisian women, as we have said, had

adopted. Her fingers being held upwards, the blood left them, and they assumed that pale pink tint which seems to shine in the light, and indicates the mysterious life which ebbs and flows beneath the flesh.

Rosa's intellect rapidly developed under the influence of such animating contact with the mind of Cornelius; and when the difficulties seemed too arduous, then their eyes would meet in a long and loving gaze, their lashes would touch, and their hair would be mingled together, and electric sparks would be given off, sufficient to illuminate the dark recesses of an idiot's brain.

And Rosa, after she had returned to her room, repeated in her mind the reading lessons, and at the same time, in her heart, the unspoken lessons of love.

One evening she came half an hour later than usual. This half-hour's tardiness was too extraordinary an incident not to call forth at once inquiries from Cornelius as to its cause.

"Oh, do not be angry with me!" she said, "it is not my fault. My father has renewed his acquaintance here at Lœwestein with an old fellow who used to come often at the Hague, to ask him to let him see the prison. He is a good sort of fellow, fond of his bottle, tells funny stories, and moreover is very free with his money, and always ready to pay his share."

"You don't know anything further of him?" asked Cornelius, surprised.

"No," she answered; "it 's only about a fortnight since my father has taken such a fancy to this friend who is so assiduous in visiting him."

"Ah," said Cornelius, shaking his head uneasily, as every new incident seemed to him to forbode some catas-

trophe, "very likely some spy, one of those who are sent into jails to watch both prisoners and keepers."

"I don't believe that," said Rosa, smiling; "if that man is spying after any one, it is certainly not after my father."

"After whom, then?"

"Me, for instance."

"You?"

"Why not?" laughed Rosa.

"Ah, that's true," Cornelius observed, with a sigh. "You will not always keep suitors at a distance, Rosa, and this man may become your husband."

"I don't say no."

"Upon what do you base your anticipation of this happiness in store?"

"Say, rather, my dread of such an occurrence, Mynheer Cornelius."

"Thank you, Rosa, for you are right; your dread — ?"

"Is based upon this — "

"Tell me; I am anxious to hear."

"This man came several times to the Buytenhof, at the Hague; and it was just at the time when you were confined there. When I left, he left too; when I came here, he came after me. At the Hague his pretext was that he wanted to see you."

"See me — me, do you say?"

"Oh, a mere pretext, without any doubt; for now, when he could plead the same reason, as you are my father's prisoner again, or rather as my father is your jailer again, he does not take any further interest in you; on the contrary, I heard him say to my father only yesterday that he did not know you."

"Go on, Rosa, pray do, so that I may try to form some idea who the man is, and what he wants."

"Are you quite sure, Mynheer Cornelius, that there is no one of your friends who may be interesting himself in your behalf?"

"I have no friends, Rosa; I have only my old nurse, whom you know, and who knows you. Alas! poor Sue, she would come herself, and would resort to no tricks, but would say, weeping bitterly, to your father or to you, 'My good sir, or my good young lady, my child is here; see how grieved I am; let me see him just for one hour, and I'll pray for you as long as I live.' No, no," continued Cornelius, "with the exception of my poor old Sue, I have no friends."

"Then I come back to what I thought before; and the more so, as last evening at sunset, while I was arranging the bed where I am to plant your bulb, I saw a shadow gliding between the elder-trees and the aspens. I did not appear to see him, but it was this man. He concealed himself and saw me turning up the earth, and certainly it was I whom he was following, and I whom he was spying after. I could not move my rake or touch a piece of dirt without his noticing it."

"Oh, yes, yes; he is in love with you!" said Cornelius. "Is he young? is he handsome?"

And he looked anxiously at Rosa, impatient for her answer.

"Young? handsome?" cried Rosa, laughing heartily. "His face is hideous; he is crooked, and nearly fifty years of age, and never dares to look me in the face or to speak aloud."

"And his name?"

"Jacob Gisels."

"I don't know him."

"So you see that he does not come after you."

"At all events, even if he does love you, Rosa, which is very likely (for to see you is to love you), you don't love him, do you?"

"Indeed I don't."

"Then I may be easy in my mind?"

"I promise you that you may."

"Well, then, now that you are beginning to know how to read, you will read all that I write to you about the pangs of jealousy and of absence, won't you, Rosa?"

"I will if you make good big letters."

But the next moment she seemed to become a little uneasy at the turn the conversation was taking. So she changed the subject abruptly.

"By the bye," said she, "how is your tulip getting on?"

"Oh, Rosa, imagine my delight; this morning I looked at it in the sun, after I had gently removed the soil which covers the bulb, and I saw the point of the first shoot. Ah, Rosa! my heart fairly overflowed; that almost imperceptible whitish bud, which a fly's wing brushing against it would break off, that mere suspicion of a living organism which was revealed by an impalpable witness, moved me more deeply than did the reading of his Highness's order which restored my life to me by turning aside the executioner's axe on the scaffold at the Buytenhof."

"You have hopes, then?" said Rosa, smiling.

"Yes, yes, I have indeed."

"And now tell me, when shall I plant my bulb?"

"Oh, the first favorable day I will tell you; but it is of

the utmost consequence that you let nobody help you, and confide your secret to no one in the world; for, you see, a connoisseur, by merely looking at the bulb, would be able to discover its value; and so, my dearest Rosa, be most especially careful of the third bulb which you still have, and which you must guard as the apple of your eye."

"It is still wrapped up in the same paper in which you put it, and just as you gave it me, Mynheer Cornelius, buried at the bottom of my chest under my lace, which keeps it dry without pressing upon it. But good-night, my poor prisoner."

"What! already?"

"Yes, I must."

"Coming so late, and going so soon?"

"My father might grow impatient not seeing me return, and my lover might suspect a rival."

She paused a moment to listen anxiously.

"What is it?" asked Van Baerle.

"I thought I heard something."

"What was it, pray?"

"Something like a step creaking on the staircase."

"Surely," said the prisoner, "that cannot be Gryphus, for he can always be heard at a distance."

"No, it is not my father, I am quite sure, but—"

"But?"

"But it might be Mynheer Jacob."

Rosa rushed towards the staircase, and a door was actually heard to close hurriedly before the maiden had descended the first ten steps.

Cornelius was very uneasy about it, but his troubles were only beginning.

When one's evil destiny is about to be fulfilled, it rarely happens that the victim is not forewarned of its approach, on the same principle of generosity which prompts the bully to give his adversary leisure to put himself on guard.

Almost invariably such warnings, which are due to the human instinct, or to the complicity of inanimate objects, which are often not so inanimate as they are generally believed to be, — almost always such warnings are neglected. The whistle has sounded, and has fallen upon an unattentive ear, which should have taken alarm, and, having taken alarm, should have been forewarned.

The following day passed without any remarkable incident. Gryphus made his three visits and discovered nothing.

When he heard the jailer approaching, — for Gryphus never came at the same hours, hoping thus to discover the secrets of the prisoner, — when he heard the jailer approaching, Van Baerle, by means of a contrivance of his own invention, which resembled those used to raise and lower bags of grain by farmers, had succeeded in arranging things so that he could suspend his jug below the ledge of tiles and stone beneath his window. The strings by which this was effected he had found means to cover with that moss which generally grew on the tiles, or in the crevices of the stonework.

Gryphus suspected nothing, and the device succeeded for eight days. One morning, however, when Cornelius, absorbed in the contemplation of his bulb, from which a bud was already peeping forth, had not heard old Gryphus coming upstairs, as a gale of wind was blowing which shook the whole tower, the door suddenly opened,

and Cornelius was surprised with his jug between his knees.

Gryphus, perceiving an unknown and consequently a forbidden object in the hands of his prisoner, pounced upon it with the same rapidity as the hawk on its prey.

As ill luck would have it, or the fatal address which the spirit of evil sometimes bestows upon the wicked, his coarse, hard hand, the same which he had broken, and which Cornelius van Baerle had set so well, fell full upon the middle of the jug at the very spot where the precious bulb was lying in the soil.

"What have you got here?" he roared. "Ah, have I caught you?" and with this he plunged his hand in the soil."

"I? Nothing, nothing," cried Cornelius, trembling.

"Ah, I have caught you!—a jug, and earth in it! There is some criminal secret at the bottom of all this."

"Oh, my good Master Gryphus," said Van Baerle, imploringly, and as anxious as the partridge whose young have been stolen by the reaper.

Gryphus, meanwhile, was digging away with his crooked fingers.

"Oh, Mynheer, Mynheer! take care!" said Cornelius, and every vestige of color left his face.

"Take care of what? In God's name, of what?" roared the jailer.

"Take care, I say, you will crush it!"

And with a rapid and almost frantic movement he snatched the jug from the hands of Gryphus, and hid it like a precious treasure behind the bulwark of his arms.

But Gryphus, obstinate, like an old man, and more and more convinced that he was unearthing a conspiracy

against the Prince of Orange, rushed up to his prisoner with his stick in the air; seeing, however, the unflinching resolution of the captive to protect his flower-pot, he was convinced that Cornelius trembled much less for his head than for his jug.

He therefore tried to wrest it from him by force.

"Ah," said the jailer, furious, "this is downright rebellion, you know."

"Let my tulip alone!" cried Van Baerle.

"Oh, yes! your tulip, indeed!" replied the old man, "we know all your tricks."

"But I swear —"

"Let go!" repeated Gryphus, stamping his foot; "let go, or I shall call the guard."

"Call whomever you like, but you shall not have this poor flower except with my life."

Gryphus, in his rage, plunged his fingers a second time into the soil, and drew out the bulb, which was quite black; and while Van Baerle, quite happy to have saved the vessel, did not suspect that the adversary had possessed himself of its precious contents, Gryphus dashed the soft bulb violently on the flags, where it was broken open, and almost immediately disappeared, crushed and ground to pulp beneath the jailer's heavy boot.

Van Baerle saw the work of destruction, got a glimpse of the moist débris, and, guessing the cause of the ferocious joy of Gryphus, uttered a cry of agony, which would have melted even the adamantine heart of that ruthless jailer who some years before killed Pelisson's spider.

The idea of striking down the cruel wretch passed like lightning through the brain of the tulip-fancier. The hot

blood rushed to his head and blinded him; and he raised in his two hands the jug heavy with all the useless earth which remained in it. One instant more, and he would have flung it at the bald head of old Gryphus.

But a cry stopped him, — a cry of tearful agony, uttered by poor Rosa, who, trembling and pale, with her arms raised to heaven, made her appearance behind the grated window, and stood between her father and her friend.

Cornelius let the jug fall, and it broke into a thousand pieces with a tremendous crash.

Gryphus then understood the danger with which he had been threatened, and he broke out in a volley of the most terrible abuse.

"Indeed," said Cornelius to him, "you must be a cowardly wretch, to rob a poor prisoner of his only consolation, a tulip bulb."

"For shame, my father!" Rosa chimed in; "it is a real crime that you have committed."

"Ah, is that you, jade?" the old man cried, turning upon her in a boiling rage; "you just attend to your own affairs, and march downstairs as fast as ever you can."

"Alas! unfortunate wretch that I am!" Cornelius repeated, in a tone of utter despair.

"After all, it is only a tulip," Gryphus resumed, a little shamefacedly. "You may have as many tulips as you like; I have three hundred of them in my loft."

"To the devil with your tulips!" cried Cornelius; "you are worthy of each other. Had I a hundred thousand million of them, I would gladly give them for the one which you have just destroyed!"

"Ah, indeed!" cried Gryphus, triumphantly. "Of

course it was not your tulip you cared for. You know perfectly well that there was some magic about that false bulb, perhaps some means of correspondence with the enemies of his Highness, who gave you your life. I always said they were wrong in not cutting your head off."

"Father, Father!" cried Rosa.

"Well, it's all right! it's all right!" said Gryphus, with increasing animation. "I have destroyed it, and I'll do the same again, as often as you repeat the trick. Didn't I tell you, my fine fellow, that I would make your life a hard one?"

"A curse on you!" Cornelius exclaimed hopelessly, as he gathered with his trembling fingers the remnants of the bulb, the tomb of so much joy and so many hopes.

"We will plant the other to-morrow, dear Mynheer Cornelius," said Rosa, in a low voice, for she understood the intense grief of the tulip-fancier, and poured these kind words, dear heart! like a drop of balm on the bleeding wounds of Cornelius.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ROSA'S LOVER.

Rosa had scarcely pronounced these consolatory words, when a voice was heard from the staircase, asking Gryphus what was going on.

"Do you hear, Father?" said Rosa.

"What?"

"Master Jacob is calling you; he is anxious."

"There was such a noise," said Gryphus, "would n't you have thought that this confounded doctor was murdering me? Ah, what a peck of trouble one always has with these fellows that know so much!"

Then pointing to the staircase, he said to Rosa, —

"You go first, young woman."

And as he closed and locked the door he continued, —

"I will be there in a moment, friend Jacob."

Thereupon he took his departure, carrying his daughter with him, and leaving Cornelius alone with his bitter grief, and muttering to himself, —

"Ah, you old hangman! it is you who have murdered me; I shall not get over this."

And certainly the unfortunate prisoner would have fallen ill but for the counterpoise which Providence had granted to his grief, and which was called "Rosa."

In the evening she came back. Her first words announced to Cornelius that henceforth her father would no longer make any objection to his cultivating flowers.

"And how do you know that?" the prisoner asked, with a doleful look.

"I know it because he has said so."

"To deceive me, perhaps."

"No, he repents of his violence."

"Ah, yes! but it's too late."

"This repentance is not his own idea."

"Whose is it, pray?"

"If you only knew how his friend scolded him."

"Ah, Mynheer Jacob again! He has n't left you then, this Mynheer Jacob?"

"I assure you, he leaves us just as little as he can help."

As she said this, she smiled in such a way that the little cloud of jealousy which had darkened the brow of Cornelius speedily vanished.

"How did it happen?" asked the prisoner.

"Well, being questioned by his friend, my father told at supper the whole story of the tulip, or rather of the bulb, and of his own fine exploit of crushing it."

Cornelius heaved a sigh which might have been called a groan.

"If you only could have seen Master Jacob at that moment!" continued Rosa. "I really thought he would set fire to the castle; his eyes were like two flaming torches, his hair stood on end, and he clenched his fist; for a moment I thought he proposed to strangle my father.

"'You have done that!' he cried, 'you have crushed the bulb!'

"'Indeed I have,' was my father's reply.

"'It is infamous!' shrieked Master Jacob; 'it is horrible! You have committed a great crime!'

"My father was quite dumfounded.

"'Are you mad, too?' he asked his friend."

"Oh, what a worthy man is this Jacob!" muttered Cornelius, — "an honest heart, a man in a thousand."

"The truth is, that it is impossible to treat a man more rudely than he did my father," continued Rosa. "His trouble seemed to be quite genuine, and he kept repeating over and over again, —

"'Crushed! the bulb crushed! My God, my God! crushed!'

"Then, turning towards me, he asked, 'But it was not the only one that he had?'"

"Did he ask that?" inquired Cornelius, with some anxiety.

"'You think it was not the only one?' said my father. 'Very well, we will search for the others.'

"'You will search for the others?' cried Jacob, taking my father by the collar; but he immediately loosed him.

"Then he turned to me again, and asked, 'And what did the poor young man say?'

"I did not know what to answer, as you had so strictly enjoined me never to allow any one to guess the interest which you take in the bulb. Fortunately, my father relieved my embarrassment by answering for me, —

"'What did he say? He began to foam at the mouth.'

"I interrupted him.

"'How could he have helped being in a rage,' said I, 'when you were so harsh and so brutal?'

"'Well, now, are you mad, too?' cried my father; 'what a terrible misfortune it is to crush a tulip bulb!

Why, you can buy a hundred of them for a florin in the market of Gorcum.'

"'But less valuable ones than that was!' I incautiously replied."

"And what did Jacob say or do at these words?" asked Cornelius.

"At these words, I must say his eyes seemed to flash fire."

"Yes," said Cornelius, "but that was not all; I am sure he said something, too."

"'So then, my pretty Rosa,' he said, with a voice as sweet as honey, 'so you think that was a valuable bulb?'

"I saw that I had made a blunder.

"'What do I know?' I said carelessly; 'do I understand anything of tulips? I only know, alas! — for we are condemned to live side by side with prisoners — I know that for them any pastime is of value. This poor Mynheer van Baerle amused himself with this bulb. Well, I say that it was sheer cruelty to take away his plaything.'

"'But first of all,' said my father, 'how did he procure this bulb? That would be a good thing to know, in my opinion.'

"I turned my eyes away to avoid my father's look; but in doing so I encountered Jacob's gaze fixed upon me.

"It seemed as if he were trying to read the very inmost thoughts of my heart.

"Some little show of anger sometimes avoids the necessity of an answer. I shrugged my shoulders, turned my back, and moved towards the door.

"But my steps were arrested by something I heard, although it was uttered in a very low voice.

"Jacob said to my father, —

"'It surely would not be very difficult to ascertain that.'

"'Yes, we can search him, and if he has any more bulbs we shall find them.'

"'That's what you must do, for ordinarily three bulbs are raised at once.'"

"Three at once!" cried Cornelius. "Did he say that I have three bulbs?"

"Well, you see his words made as much impression on me as my repetition of them does on you. I turned round. They were both of them so deeply engaged in their conversation that they did not observe my movement.

"'But,' said my father, 'perhaps he has not got his bulbs about him?'

"'Then make him come down, under some pretext or other, and I will search his cell meanwhile.'"

"Aha!" exclaimed Cornelius. "Your friend Jacob must be an infernal scoundrel!"

"I am afraid he is."

"Let me see, Rosa," continued Cornelius, with a pensive air.

"What is it?"

"Did not you tell me that on the day when you were preparing your bed, this man followed you?"

"Yes."

"And that he glided like a shadow behind the elder-trees?"

"Certainly."

"So that not one of your movements escaped him?"

"Not a single one."

"Rosa," said Cornelius, turning pale.

"Well?"

"It was not you he was after."

"Who else, then?"

"It is not you that he is in love with!"

"With whom else, pray?"

"He was after my bulb, and is in love with my tulip!"

"Upon my word, it is very possible!" cried Rosa.

"Will you make sure of it?"

"How?"

"Oh, it would be very easy!"

"Tell me how."

"Go to-morrow into the garden; try to arrange that Jacob may know, as he did the first time, that you are going there, and try to make sure that he follows you, as he did the first time. Make a pretence of putting the bulb in the ground; leave the garden, but keep your eye on him, and see what he does."

"Well, and then?"

"Then we will govern our actions accordingly."

"Oh," said Rosa, with a sigh, "you are very fond of your bulbs, Mynheer Cornelius."

"To tell the truth," said the prisoner, sighing likewise, "since your father crushed that unfortunate bulb, I feel as if part of my own self had been paralyzed."

"What do you say to trying another plan?" Rosa asked him.

"What is it?"

"Why don't you accept my father's proposition?"

"What proposition?"

"Did he not offer you tulip-bulbs by hundreds?"

"Indeed he did."

"Accept two or three, and, along with them, you may raise the third of your own bulbs."

"Yes, that would do very well," said Cornelius, knitting his brow, "if your father were alone; but there is that other fellow, that wretch Jacob, watching every movement we make."

"That is true; but only think! you are depriving yourself, I can see, of a very great pleasure."

She pronounced these words with a smile which was not altogether without a tinge of irony.

Cornelius reflected for a moment; he evidently was struggling against some vehement desire.

"No!" he cried at last, with the stoicism of a Roman of old; "no, it would be a weakness, it would be a folly, it would be cowardice! If I thus gave up the last resource which we possess to the uncertain chances of anger and envy, I should never deserve to be forgiven. No, Rosa, no; to-morrow we will decide upon the spot for your tulip; you will plant it according to my instructions; and as to the third bulb" — Cornelius here heaved a deep sigh — "as for the third, keep it in your chest; watch over it as a miser over his first or last piece of gold, as the mother over her child, as the wounded man over the last drop of blood in his veins, — watch over it, Rosa! Some voice within me tells me that it will be our salvation, and the source of wealth to us! Watch over it! And even if the lightning should strike Lœwestein, give me your oath, Rosa, that you will seize and save this last of the bulbs which encloses the possibility

of a black tulip in preference to your rings or your jewels or the pretty golden head-dress which frames your lovely features; swear it, Rosa!"

"Be easy, Mynheer Cornelius," said Rosa, with a sweet mixture of melancholy and gravity; "be easy; your wishes are law to me."

"And even," continued Van Baerle, warming more and more with his subject, "if you should perceive that you are followed, that your steps are watched, and that your speech has excited the suspicion of your father, or of that wretched Jacob, whom I perfectly loathe, — well, Rosa, don't hesitate for one moment to sacrifice me, who am only living now through your means; me, who have no one in the world but you: give me up and come no more to see me."

Rosa felt her heart sink within her, and her eyes were filling with tears.

"Alas!" she said.

"What is it?" asked Cornelius.

"I see one thing too clearly."

"What do you see?"

"I see," she said, sobbing as if her heart would break, "I see that you love your tulips so dearly that there is no room in your heart for other affection."

With this she fled.

Cornelius, after this, passed one of the worst nights he ever had had in his life.

Rosa was vexed with him, — and with good reason. Perhaps she would never return to see him, and then he would have no more news either of Rosa or of his tulips.

Now, how can we explain such a character as this,

entirely unprecedented among the Simon-pure tulip-fanciers, a race which has ceased to exist?

We have to confess, to the lasting shame of our hero and of floriculture in general, that of his two affections he felt most strongly inclined to regret that of the flesh; and when, at about three in the morning, he fell asleep, overcome with fatigue, tormented with dread, and torn with remorse, the great black tulip yielded precedence in his dreams to the sweet blue eyes of the fair-haired Frisian maid.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE MAID AND THE FLOWER.

But poor Rosa, in her secluded chamber, could not know of whom or of what Cornelius was dreaming.

As a consequence of what he had said she was more ready to believe that his visions were of the black tulip than of her; and yet Rosa was mistaken.

But as there was no one to tell her that she was mistaken, and as Cornelius's thoughtless words had fallen upon her heart like drops of poison, Rosa did not dream, but wept.

The fact was, that as Rosa was a high-spirited creature, of no mean perception and a noble heart, she took a very clear and judicious view of her own social position, if not of her moral and physical qualities.

Cornelius was a scholar, and was wealthy, — at least he had been before the confiscation of his property; Cornelius belonged to the merchant-bourgeoisie, who were prouder of their richly-emblazoned shop-signs than the hereditary nobility of their heraldic bearings. Therefore, although he might find Rosa a pleasant companion for the dreary hours of his captivity, when it came to a question of bestowing his heart, it was almost certain that he would bestow it upon a tulip, — that is to say, upon the proudest and noblest of flowers, rather than upon poor Rosa, the jailer's lowly child.

Thus Rosa understood Cornelius's preference of the tulip to herself, but was only so much the more unhappy therefor.

During the whole of this terrible night the poor girl did not close an eye, and before she rose in the morning she had formed a resolution, — she had resolved to return to the grated window no more.

But as she knew with what ardent desire Cornelius looked forward to the news about his tulip; as she did not choose to expose herself to the risk of continual meeting with a man for whom she felt her sense of pity increasing to such a degree that it had gone beyond mere compassion, and was advancing by the straight road and with great strides towards passionate love; as she did not, on the other hand, wish to drive him to despair, — she resolved to continue by herself the reading and writing lessons; and, fortunately, she had made sufficient progress to dispense with the help of a master, provided that his name was not Cornelius.

Rosa, therefore, applied herself most diligently to reading poor Cornelius de Witt's Bible, on the second leaf of which (become the first, since the other had been torn out) the last will of Cornelius van Baerle was written.

"Alas!" she muttered, when perusing again this document, which she never finished without a tear, love's pearl, rolling from her limpid eyes down her pale cheeks, — "alas! at that time I thought for one moment that he loved me."

Poor Rosa! she was mistaken. Never had the prisoner's feeling for her amounted to true, sincere love until the time at which we are now arrived, when, as we have said with some sense of embarrassment, in the contest

between the black tulip and Rosa, the tulip had had to give way.

But Rosa, we say again, knew nothing of the discomfiture of the great black tulip.

Having finished her reading, a science in which she had made great progress, she took her pen and began, with as laudable diligence, the by far more difficult task of writing.

As, however, Rosa was already able to write almost legibly on the day when Cornelius so incautiously opened his heart, she did not despair of progressing quickly enough to write the prisoner how his tulip was faring in a week at the very latest.

She had not forgotten one word of the directions Cornelius had given her. In fact, Rosa never forgot a syllable that Cornelius addressed to her, even when what he said did not take the form of directions about his bulbs.

He, on his part, awoke more madly in love than ever. The tulip, indeed, was still a luminous and prominent object in his mind; but he no longer looked upon it as a treasure to which he ought to sacrifice everything, even Rosa, but as a valuable flower, a marvellous combination of nature and art, which God had given him for his beloved to wear in her bosom.

Yet during the whole of that day he was haunted with a vague uneasiness. He resembled those men whose will is sufficiently strong to enable them to forget for the moment some great danger which is impending for the night or the morrow. Their pre-occupation once overcome, their life goes on in its accustomed course. But from time to time the forgotten danger gnaws at their heart with its sharp tooth. They start in alarm, ask themselves

why they did so, and then, recalling what they had forgotten, they say, sighing bitterly, "Oh, yes, it 's *that* !" The "that" in Cornelius's case was the fear lest Rosa might not come in the evening as usual.

As the evening approached, his pre-occupation became more and more acute and absorbing, until at last it assumed entire control of his whole body, and for the time was his whole life.

Thus it was with a loudly-beating heart that he welcomed the darkness; and as it grew darker and darker, the words which he had said to Rosa the evening before, and which had so deeply afflicted her, came back to his mind more vividly than ever; and he asked himself how he could have told his gentle comforter to sacrifice him to his tulip, — that is to say, to give up seeing him if necessary, — whereas to him the sight of Rosa had become an essential condition of life.

In Cornelius's cell he could hear the hours strike on the clock of the fortress. Seven o'clock struck, then eight, then nine. Never did the clang of brass make a deeper echo in the heart of man than did the last stroke of the bell, marking the ninth hour, in the heart of Cornelius.

All was then silent again. Cornelius put his hand on his heart to repress, as it were, its violent palpitation, and listened.

The noise of Rosa's footstep, the rustling of her gown on the staircase, were so familiar to his ear, that she had no sooner mounted one step than he would say to himself, —

"Here she comes!"

This evening no sound broke the silence of the cor-

ridor. The clock struck nine and a quarter; then two strokes sounded for the half-hour; then the three-quarters; and at last its deep tone announced, not only to the inmates of the fortress, but also to all the inhabitants of Lœwestein, that it was ten o'clock.

This was the hour at which Rosa generally parted from Cornelius. The hour had struck, but Rosa had not come.

Thus, then, his foreboding had not deceived him. Rosa, in her annoyance, shut herself up in her room and left him to himself.

"Alas!" said Cornelius to himself, "I have deserved all this. She will come no more; and she is right in staying away: in her place I should do just the same."

And nevertheless, Cornelius still listened, waited, and hoped.

He listened and waited until midnight; but then he gave up hope, and threw himself, dressed as he was, upon his bed.

It was a long and sad night for him; day came at last, but day brought no hope to the prisoner.

At eight in the morning, the door of his cell opened; but Cornelius did not even turn his head: he had heard the heavy step of Gryphus in the corridor, but had felt perfectly sure that it was the step of only one person.

He did not even so much as look at Gryphus.

And yet he would have been so glad to ask him for news of Rosa. He was actually on the point of asking the question, strange as it would have appeared to her father. He hoped — the selfish fellow! — to hear from Gryphus that his daughter was ill.

Except on extraordinary occasions, Rosa never came

during the day. Cornelius, therefore, did not really expect her, as long as the day lasted. Yet his sudden starts, his listening at the door, his rapid questioning glances towards the wicket, showed that the prisoner entertained a vague hope that Rosa might depart from her regular custom.

At Gryphus's second visit, Cornelius, contrary to all his former habits, asked the old jailer, with his most winning voice, about her health; but Gryphus, laconic as a Spartan, contented himself with the answer, —

"She 's all right!"

At the third visit, Cornelius changed the form of his question.

"I hope nobody is ill at Loewestein?"

"Nobody," replied Gryphus, even more sparing of his words than before, as he slammed the door in the prisoner's face.

Gryphus, being little used to such amenities on the part of Cornelius, saw in them the beginning of an attempt to bribe him.

Cornelius was alone once more; it was seven o'clock in the evening, and the heart-rending anguish of the evening before, which we have tried to depict, returned with even greater intensity.

But again the hours passed away without bringing the sweet vision which lighted up, through the wicket, the cell of poor Cornelius, and which upon retiring left light enough in his heart to last until it came back again.

Van Baerle passed the night in an agony of despair. On the following day Gryphus appeared to him even more hideous, brutal, and hateful than usual. In his

mind, or rather in his heart, he had cherished a hope that it was he who prevented his daughter from coming.

He had a fierce desire to strangle Gryphus; but if that were to come to pass, every law, divine and human, would have interfered to forbid his ever seeing Rosa more.

Thus the jailer escaped, without suspecting it, one of the greatest dangers that he had ever been threatened with during his whole life.

The evening came, and his despair changed to melancholy, which was the more gloomy, because, in spite of himself, thoughts of his poor tulip would mingle themselves with Van Baerle's mental suffering. It was now just that part of April which the most experienced gardeners point out as the precise time when tulips ought to be planted. He had said to Rosa, —

"I will tell you the day when you are to put the bulb in the ground."

He ought, on the morrow, to fix the following evening for the time. The weather was propitious; the air, although still damp, began to be tempered by the pale rays of the April sun, which, being the first to come, are so welcome in spite of their pallor. Suppose Rosa should allow the right moment for planting the bulb to pass by! Suppose that, in addition to the grief of seeing her no more, he should have to deplore the misfortune of seeing his tulip fail because it had been planted too late, or perhaps not at all!

These two vexations, combined, might well make him leave off eating and drinking.

This was the case on the fourth day.

It was pitiful to see Cornelius, dumb with grief, and pale from utter prostration, stretch out his head through

the iron bars of his window, at the risk of not being able to draw it back again, to try and get a glimpse of the garden on the left, spoken of by Rosa, who had told him that its wall bordered upon the river, in the hope of espying by the early rays of the April sun the maiden or the tulip, — his two lost loves.

In the evening, Gryphus took away his breakfast and dinner; he had scarcely touched them.

On the following day he did not touch them at all, and Gryphus carried away the delicacies intended for those two meals quite untasted.

Cornelius had remained in bed the whole day.

"Well," said Gryphus, coming down from the last visit, "I think we shall soon get rid of our scholar."

Rosa was startled.

"Nonsense," said Jacob, "what do you mean?"

"He doesn't drink, he doesn't eat, he doesn't leave his bed. Like Mynheer Grotius, he will leave here in a chest; only the chest will be a coffin."

Rosa grew as pale as death.

"Ah," she murmured, "I understand; he is worried about his tulip."

And rising with a heavy heart, she returned to her chamber, where she took a pen and paper, and during the whole of that night busied herself forming letters.

On the following morning, when Cornelius got up to drag himself to the window, he perceived a paper which had been slipped under the door.

He pounced upon it, opened it, and read the following words, in a handwriting which he could scarcely have recognized as that of Rosa, so much had she improved during her short absence of seven days, —

"Never fear, your tulip is doing finely."

Although these few words of Rosa somewhat soothed the grief of Cornelius, yet he was no less sensible of their bitter irony. Rosa, then, was not ill, but was hurt to the quick; she had not been forcibly prevented from coming, but had voluntarily stayed away. Thus Rosa, being at liberty, had sufficient strength of will to abstain from coming to him, who was dying with grief for a sight of her.

Cornelius had paper and a pencil which Rosa had brought to him. He guessed that she expected an answer, but that she would not come before the evening to get it. He therefore wrote on a piece of paper, similar to that which he had received, —

"It is not my anxiety about the tulip that has made me ill, but my grief at not seeing you."

After Gryphus had made his last visit of the day and evening had come, he slipped the paper under the door, and listened.

But listen as intently as he would, he heard neither Rosa's footstep nor the rustling of her gown.

He heard naught but a voice as light as a breath and sweet as a kiss, which whispered through the little wicket the word, —

"To-morrow."

To-morrow — it was the eighth day. For eight days Cornelius and Rosa had not seen each other.

## CHAPTER XX.

### WHAT HAD TAKEN PLACE DURING THOSE EIGHT DAYS.

On the following evening, at the usual hour, Van Baerle heard some one scratch at the little wicket, just as Rosa had been in the habit of doing in the happy days of their friendship.

We may imagine that Cornelius was not far from the door, between the bars of which he at last saw again the lovely face which had disappeared from his life for so long.

Rosa, who was waiting there, with a lamp in her hand, could not restrain a startled movement when she saw how pale and sad he was.

"Are you in pain, Mynheer Cornelius?" she asked.

"Yes, I am," he answered, "in pain of mind and body."

"I saw that you did not eat," said Rosa; "my father told me that you remained in bed all day, so I wrote to you to ease your mind as to the fate of the precious object of your anxiety."

"And I," said Cornelius, "I have given you my reply. Seeing you return, my dear Rosa, I thought you had received my letter."

"It is true, I have received it."

"You cannot this time excuse yourself by saying that you cannot read. Not only do you read very

fluently, but also you have made marvellous progress in writing."

"Indeed, I not only received your letter, but I read it, too. So I have come to see whether there is not some means of restoring you to health."

"Restore me to health!" cried Cornelius; "but have you any good news to tell me?"

As he spoke, the youth fixed upon Rosa his eyes sparkling with hope.

Whether she did not, or would not, understand this look, the maiden answered gravely, —

"I have no news except about your tulip, which is, I know, the object of your gravest anxiety."

Rosa pronounced these few words in a freezing tone, which cut deep into the heart of Cornelius. The zealous tulip-fancier did not understand all that this poor child, who was always at odds with her rival the black tulip, was striving to hide under the mask of indifference.

"Oh!" muttered Cornelius, "again! again! My God, Rosa, have I not told you that I thought but of you; that it was you alone whom I regretted; you alone whom I missed; you alone who by your absence deprived me of air and light and warmth and life?"

Rosa smiled with a melancholy air.

"Ah," she said, "your tulip has been in great danger."

Cornelius trembled involuntarily, and allowed himself to be caught in the trap, if trap there were.

"Great danger!" he cried, trembling like a leaf; "in Heaven's name, what danger?"

Rosa looked at him with gentle compassion; she felt that what she wished was beyond the power of this

man, and that he must be taken as he was, foibles and all.

"Yes," she said, "you guessed aright; Jacob the wooer, Jacob the love-lorn swain, did not come here on my account."

"What did he come for, pray?" Cornelius anxiously asked.

"He came for the sake of the tulip."

"Alas!" said Cornelius, growing even paler at this piece of information than he had been when Rosa, by a misapprehension, had told him a fortnight before that Jacob was coming on her account.

Rosa saw his alarm, and Cornelius guessed, from the expression of her face, that she was pursuing the line of thought we have indicated.

"Oh, pardon me, Rosa!" he said; "I understand you, and I am well aware of the kindness and sincerity of your heart. To you God has given the wit and judgment, the strength and ability, to defend yourself; but to my poor tulip, when it is in danger, God has given nothing of all this."

Rosa, without replying to the prisoner's excuse, continued: —

"From the moment when I first knew that you were anxious on account of the man who followed me, and in whom I had recognized Jacob, I was even more anxious myself; and so I did as you told me, on the day after that on which I saw you last, when you said —"

Cornelius interrupted her.

"Once more, pardon me, Rosa!" he cried. "I was wrong in saying to you what I said. I have asked your pardon for that unfortunate speech before. I ask it again; shall I always ask it in vain?"

"On the following day," Rosa continued, "remembering what you had told me about the stratagem which I was to employ to ascertain whether that odious man was after the tulip, or after me — "

"Yes, yes, odious, indeed! You *hate* him, don't you?"

"I do hate him," said Rosa, "as he is the cause of all the unhappiness I have suffered these eight days."

"Ah, have you also been unhappy? Thank you for that word, Rosa."

"Well, on the day after that unfortunate one, I went down into the garden, and proceeded toward the bed where I was to plant your tulip, looking round all the while to see whether I was again followed as I was before."

"Well?" Cornelius asked.

"Well, the same shadow glided between the gate and the wall, and once more disappeared behind the elder-trees."

"You pretended not to see him, did n't you?" Cornelius asked, remembering all the details of the advice he had given Rosa.

"Yes; and I stooped over the bed and went to digging with a spade, as if I were going to put the bulb in."

"And he — what did he do during all this time?"

"I saw his eyes glisten through the branches of the tree, like those of a tiger."

"Do you see, do you see?" cried Cornelius.

"Then, after having finished my make-believe work, I retired."

"But only behind the garden-door, — is it not true, —

so that you might see through the crack or the keyhole what he did when you had left?"

"He waited for a moment, very likely to make sure of my not coming back; after which he sneaked out from his hiding-place, and approached the bed by a long *détour*. At last, having reached his goal, — that is to say, the spot where the ground was newly turned, — he stopped with a careless air, looking about in all directions, scanned every corner of the garden, every window of the neighboring houses, and looked inquiringly at the earth and the sky; and thinking himself quite alone, quite isolated, and out of everybody's sight, he rushed at the bed, plunged both his hands into the soft soil, took a handful of the mould, which he gently broke up between his fingers to see whether the bulb was in it, and repeated the same thing twice or three times, each time more eagerly than the last, — until at last, as it began to dawn upon him that he had been made the victim of a fraud, he struggled to calm the agitation which was raging in his breast, took up the rake, smoothed the ground, so as to leave it at his departure in the same state that it was before he had pulled it over, and quite shamefaced and sheepish, walked back to the door, affecting the unconcerned air of an ordinary promenader."

"Oh, the wretch!" muttered Cornelius, wiping the perspiration from his brow, — "oh, the wretch! I guessed his intentions. But the bulb, Rosa, — what have you done with it? It is already rather late to plant it, alas!"

"The bulb? It has been in the ground for these six days."

"Where and how?" cried Cornelius. "Good Heaven,

what imprudence! Where is it? In what sort of soil is it? Has it a good or bad exposure? Is there no risk of its being stolen by that detestable Jacob?"

"There is no danger of its being stolen," said Rosa, "unless Jacob forces the door of my room."

"Oh, then it is always under your eye; it is in your own room?" said Cornelius, somewhat relieved. "But in what soil, in what kind of vessel? You don't let it grow in water, I hope, like the good women of Harlem and Dort, who insist upon it that water will take the place of earth, — as if water, which is made up of thirty-three parts of oxygen and sixty-six of hydrogen, could — But what am I saying, Rosa?"

"Yes, it is rather deep for me," replied the maiden, with a smile. "So I will content myself with replying, to set your mind at rest, that your bulb is not in water."

"I breathe again."

"It is in a good stone pot, just about the size of the jug in which you planted yours. The soil is composed of three parts of common mould taken from the best spot of the garden, and one of dirt from the street. Oh, I have heard you and that detestable Jacob, as you call him, so often talk about what is the soil best fitted for growing tulips, that I know it as well as the first gardener of Harlem."

"And now about the exposure. What exposure has it, Rosa?"

"At present it has the sun all day long, — that is to say, when the sun shines. But when it once peeps out of the ground, and when the sun is hotter, I shall do as you did here, dear Mynheer Cornelius; I shall put it on the sill of my eastern window from eight in the morning

until eleven, and of my western window from three to five in the afternoon."

"That 's it, that 's it!" cried Cornelius; "and you are a perfect gardener, my lovely Rosa. But I am afraid the nursing of my tulip will take up all your time."

"Yes, it will," said Rosa; "but what matters it, for it is your tulip and my daughter. I shall devote my time to it as I would to my child, if I were a mother. It is only by becoming its mother," Rosa added smilingly, "that I can cease to be its rival."

"Dear, good Rosa!" murmured Cornelius, with a glance in which there was much more of the lover than of the gardener, and which afforded Rosa some consolation.

Then, after a silence of some moments, during which Cornelius had tried to grasp Rosa's fleeting hand through the grating, he said, —

"So the bulb has now been in the soil for six days?"

"Yes, six days, Mynheer Cornelius," replied the maiden.

"And it does not yet show itself?"

"No; but I think it will to-morrow."

"Well, then, to-morrow you will bring me news of it, and of yourself, won't you, Rosa? I am very anxious about the daughter, as you called it just now; but the mother is the object of a much deeper and different sort of interest to me."

"To-morrow?" said Rosa, looking at Cornelius askance. "I don't know whether I shall be able to come to-morrow."

"Good heavens!" said Cornelius, "why can't you come to-morrow?"

"Mynheer Cornelius, I have a thousand things to do."

"While I have only one," muttered Cornelius.

"Yes," said Rosa, "to love your tulip."

"To love you, Rosa."

Rosa shook her head; again there was a pause.

"Well," Cornelius at last broke the silence, — "well, Rosa, everything changes in the realm of Nature; the flowers of spring are succeeded by other flowers; and we see the bees, which so tenderly caressed the violets and the wallflowers, flutter as lovingly about the honeysuckles, the rose, the jessamine, the chrysanthemum, and the geranium."

"What does all this mean?" asked Rosa.

"It means that you at first took pleasure in hearing me tell of my joy and my sorrow; that you caressed the flower of our youth, but now mine has faded in the shadow. The garden of hope and pleasure of a poor captive knows only one season. It is not like the lovely gardens which are open to the air and the sunlight. Once the May harvest is gathered, and the booty secured, bees like you, Rosa, — bees with slender bodies and golden antennæ and diaphanous wings, — fly between the bars, leave the cold and solitude and gloom, to find elsewhere sweet odors and the warm breath of summer flowers."

"Happy they, at last!"

Rosa gazed at Cornelius with a loving smile which he did not see, for his eyes were raised toward heaven.

He continued, sighing heavily, —

"You have abandoned me, Rosa, so that you may have your allotted four seasons of pleasure elsewhere. You have done well, and I will not complain. What claim have I to your fidelity?"

"My fidelity!" Rosa exclaimed, with her eyes full of

tears, and no longer caring to hide from Cornelius this dew of pearls rolling down her cheeks, — "my fidelity! have I not been faithful to you?"

"Alas! do you call it faithful to desert me, and to leave me here to die?"

"But, Mynheer Cornelius," said Rosa, "am I not doing everything for you that could give you pleasure? Have I not devoted myself to your tulip?"

"You are bitter, Rosa; you taunt me with the only unalloyed pleasure I have had in this world."

"I taunt you with nothing, Mynheer Cornelius, except, perhaps, with the intense grief which I felt when they told me at the Buytenhof that you were about to be put to death."

"You are displeased, Rosa, my sweet Rosa, with my intense love for flowers."

"I am not displeased with your love for them, Mynheer Cornelius; only it makes me sad to think that you love them better than you do me."

"Oh, my dear, dear beloved, see how my hands tremble! see how pale my cheek is, and hear how my heart beats! Oh, well, it is not because my black tulip is smiling upon me and calling me, — no; it is because you are smiling upon me, you, my beloved, and because you are leaning towards me; it is because — I do not know if it be true — but because it seems to me that even while avoiding them, your hands long to clasp mine, and because I feel the warmth of your dear, soft cheeks behind the cruel bars. Rosa, my love, destroy the bulb of the black tulip, destroy all hope of seeing that flower bloom, extinguish the pleasant light of the pure and soothing fancy which I have become used to dreaming

every day. So be it! No more flowers with their lovely bright robes, their graceful elegance, their capricious charm; take it all away, O thou flower who art jealous of thy sisters, — take it all away, but leave me, I beseech, your voice and your face, the sound of your step on the staircase; leave me the light of your eyes in the dark corridor, and the assurance of your love which pours everlasting balm into my heart. Love me, Rosa, love me, for I am sure that I love but you!"

"Yes, after the black tulip," sighed the maiden, whose warm, soft hands at last abandoned themselves through the grating to the lips of Cornelius.

"Before everything, Rosa."

"Can I believe you?"

"As you believe in God."

"Well, then, be it so; but loving me does not bind you to much."

"Very little, unfortunately, dear Rosa; but it binds you, remember."

"Me! to what does it bind me, pray?" asked Rosa.

"First of all, not to marry."

She smiled.

"Ah," she said, "what tyrants you all are! You worship a beautiful creature; you think and dream of nothing but her; you are condemned to death, and on your way to the scaffold you devote to her your last sigh; and now demand that I, poor girl, should sacrifice all my dreams and my ambition."

"But what beautiful creature are you talking about, Rosa, I beg to know?" said Cornelius, searching his memory in vain for a woman to whom Rosa might possibly be alluding.

"Why, the dark beauty, Mynheer, — the dark beauty with the graceful form, delicate feet, and noble head; in short, I am speaking of your flower."

Cornelius smiled.

"That is an imaginary lady-love, dear Rosa; whereas, without counting your, or rather my amorous friend Jacob, you are surrounded by gallants eager to make love to you. Do you remember, Rosa, what you told me of the students, officers, and clerks of the Hague? Are there no clerks, officers, or students at Loewestein?"

"Indeed there are, plenty of them."

"Who write letters?"

"Who write letters."

"And now that you know how to read — "

Here Cornelius heaved a sigh at the thought that, poor captive as he was, to him alone Rosa owed the faculty of reading the love-letters which she received.

"Ah," said Rosa, "it seems to me that in reading the notes addressed to me, and carefully scrutinizing the gallants who present themselves, I am only following your instructions."

"How so? My instructions?"

"Yes, your instructions," said Rosa, sighing in her turn; "have you forgotten the will written by your hand in the Bible of Cornelius de Witt? I have not forgotten it; for now that I know how to read, I read it every day, and twice a day oftener than once. In that will you bid me love and marry a handsome young man of twenty-six or eight years. I am on the lookout for that young man; and as the whole of my day is taken up with your tulip, you must leave my evenings free to find him."

"But, Rosa, the will was made in the expectation of death, and, thank Heaven, I am still alive."

"Well, then, I will not look for the handsome young man of twenty-six or twenty-eight, and I will come and see you."

"Ah, do, Rosa! Come, come!"

"On one condition."

"Granted beforehand!"

"That the black tulip shall not be mentioned for the next three days."

"It shall never be mentioned any more if you wish it, Rosa."

"Oh," the damsel said, "I will not ask for impossibilities."

As she spoke she put her fresh cheek, as if unconsciously, so near the iron grating that Cornelius was able to touch it with his lips.

Rosa uttered a little exclamation of love, and disappeared.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE SECOND BULB.

It was a beautiful night, and the next day was finer still.

During the last few days the prison had been dull and dark and dismal; it bore heavily with all its weight on the unfortunate captive. Its walls were black, its air chilling; the iron bars seemed so close together as scarcely to admit the daylight.

But when Cornelius awoke, a beam of the morning sun was playing among the iron bars; pigeons were hovering about with outspread wings, and others were lovingly cooing on the roof near the still closed window.

Cornelius ran to the window and opened it; it seemed to him as if life and joy, and almost liberty, entered his gloomy cell with the ray of sunlight. Love was blooming there, and causing everything about it to bloom as well, — love, that heavenly flower with a radiance and a perfume far different from all the flowers of earth!

When Gryphus entered the prisoner's cell, instead of finding him sullen and still in bed, as on other occasions, lo! he was standing at the window, and singing a little air from some opera. Gryphus looked at him surlily.

"Halloa!" he exclaimed.

"How are you this morning?" asked Cornelius.

Again Gryphus scowled at him.

"And the dog and Master Jacob and our fair Rosa, — how are they all?"

Gryphus ground his teeth.

"Here is your breakfast," he growled.

"Thank you, friend Cerberus," said the prisoner; "you are just in time, for I am very hungry."

"Oh, you're hungry, are you?" said Gryphus.

"Why not, pray?" asked Van Baerle.

"The conspiracy seems to be prospering," remarked Gryphus.

"What conspiracy?"

"Oh, yes! I know what they all say; but we will keep a good watch, my learned friend, — never fear, we will keep a good watch."

"Watch away, friend Gryphus, watch away; my conspiracy, as well as my person, is entirely at your service."

"We'll see about that this noon."

With this Gryphus left the room.

"This noon!" repeated Cornelius. "What does that mean? Well, let us wait until noon, and then we shall see."

It was very easy for Cornelius to wait for noon, for he was waiting for nine at night.

It struck twelve, and he heard on the staircase not only the steps of Gryphus, but with them those of three or four soldiers who were coming up with him.

The door opened, Gryphus entered, led his men in. and shut the door after them.

"There, now search!"

They searched Cornelius's pockets, and also between

his jacket and his waistcoat, between his waistcoat and his shirt, and beneath his shirt; they found nothing.

They then searched the sheets, the mattress, and the straw of his bed, and again they found nothing.

Great was the silent satisfaction of Cornelius that he had not taken the third bulb under his own care. Gryphus would have been sure to ferret it out in the search, however carefully it was concealed, and would then have treated it as he did the first.

As it was, no prisoner ever looked on at the execution of a search-warrant in his cell with more serenity than Cornelius exhibited on this occasion.

Gryphus retired with the pencil and the two or three leaves of white paper which Rosa had given to Van Baerle; this was the only trophy brought back from the expedition.

At six Gryphus came again, but alone. Cornelius tried to propitiate him; but Gryphus growled, showed a great fang which he had in the corner of his mouth, and went out backward like a man who is afraid of being attacked from behind.

Cornelius burst out laughing; whereupon Gryphus, who had read somewhat, shouted at him through the grating, —

"All right, all right! 'He laughs best who laughs last.'"

Cornelius laughed last, — on that occasion at least, for he was expecting Rosa.

Rosa came at nine. She was without a lantern. She no longer needed a light, for she knew how to read; moreover, the light might betray her, as Jacob kept a more persistent espionage than ever upon her; and

lastly, in the light her flushed cheeks would have been too perceptible when she blushed.

Of what did the young people talk that evening? Of those matters of which lovers talk at the house-doors in France, on opposite sides of a balcony in Spain, and from the top to the bottom of a terrace in the Orient.

They talked of those things which add wings to the feet of the hours, and put additional feathers into the wings of time.

They talked of everything except the black tulip.

At last, when the clock struck ten, they parted as usual.

Cornelius was happy, — as thoroughly happy as a tulip-fancier could be who had had no chance to talk about his tulip.

He found Rosa as fair as all the loves; he found her sweet and lovely and charming.

But why did Rosa object to the tulip being mentioned?

This was indeed a great defect in Rosa.

Cornelius confessed to himself, with a sigh, that woman was not perfect.

Part of the night he thought of this imperfection, — that is to say, as long as he was awake he thought of Rosa.

After he fell asleep he dreamed of her.

But the Rosa of his dreams was by far more perfect than the Rosa of real life. Not only did she speak of the tulip, but she brought him a magnificent black one in a china vase.

Cornelius awoke trembling with joy, and whispering, —

"Rosa, Rosa, I love you!"

And as it was already day he thought it best not to fall asleep again; so he passed the whole day dwelling

upon the thought that was in his mind when he awoke.

Ah, if Rosa had only conversed about the tulip, Cornelius would have preferred her to Semiramis or Cleopatra, to Queen Elizabeth or Anne of Austria, — that is to say, to the greatest or most beautiful queens whom the world has seen.

But Rosa had forbidden it under pain of not returning. Rosa had forbidden the least mention of the tulip for three days.

That meant seventy-two hours given to the lover to be sure; but it was seventy-two hours stolen from the horticulturist.

It was true that of the seventy-two hours, thirty-six had passed already; and the remaining thirty-six would pass quickly enough, — eighteen in waiting for the evening's interview, and eighteen in thinking about it.

Rosa came at the same hour; and Cornelius underwent his penance most heroically. He would have made a most eminent Pythagorean, would Cornelius; and if he might only have inquired about his tulip once a day, he would have willingly gone five years, according to the statutes of the order, without talking at all.

His fair visitor, however, was well aware that when one's orders are obeyed on one point one must yield on another; therefore Rosa allowed Cornelius to draw her hands through the little window and to kiss her golden locks through the bars.

Poor child! all these little lovers' tricks were much more dangerous than speaking of the tulip. She became aware of the fact when she returned to her room with a beating heart, glowing cheeks, burning lips, and moist eyes.

And soon the following evening, after the first greetings and endearments, she looked at him through the bars in the darkness, with the expression which one can feel even when one does not see it.

"Well," she said, "it has come up."

"It has come up! Who? What?" asked Cornelius, hardly daring to believe that Rosa would of her own accord abridge the term of his probation.

"The tulip," said Rosa.

"What!" cried Cornelius; "you give me permission, then?"

"Oh, yes!" Rosa replied, in the tone of an affectionate mother when she allows her child to indulge some wish.

"Ah, Rosa!" said Cornelius, putting his lips to the grating, with the hope of touching a cheek, a hand, a forehead, — anything, in short.

He touched something much better, — two warm and half open lips.

Rosa uttered a slight scream.

Cornelius understood that he must make haste to continue the conversation. He guessed that this unexpected kiss had frightened Rosa.

"Is it growing up straight?" he asked.

"Straight as a Frisian distaff," said Rosa.

"How high?"

"At least two inches."

"Oh, Rosa, take good care of it, and you will see how fast it will grow."

"Can I take more care of it?" said she. "I think of nothing else."

"Of nothing else, Rosa? Take care, or I shall take my turn at being jealous."

"Oh, you know that to think of the tulip is to think of you. I never lose sight of it; I see it from my bed, — when I awake it is the first object that meets my eyes, and the last on which they rest before I fall asleep; during the day I sit and work by its side, for I have hardly left my chamber since I put it there."

"You are right, Rosa; it is your dowry, you know."

"Yes; and, thanks to it, I may marry a young man of twenty-six or twenty-eight years, with whom I shall fall in love."

"Hush, you bad girl!"

That evening Cornelius was the happiest of men. Rosa allowed him to hold her hand as long as he chose to keep it; and he talked about his tulip to his heart's content.

From that hour every day marked some progress in the growth of the tulip and in the affection of the two young people. At one time the news was that the leaves had expanded, and at another that the flower itself had formed.

Great was the joy of Cornelius at this news; and his questions succeeded each other with a rapidity which gave proof of their importance.

"Formed!" exclaimed Cornelius; "has it really formed?"

"It has," repeated Rosa.

Cornelius trembled so with joy that he was obliged to hold by the grating.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed.

Then he turned to Rosa again, —

"Is the oval regular, the cylinder full, and are the points very green?"

"The oval is almost one inch long, and as slender as a

needle, the cylinder swells at the sides, and the points are ready to open."

That night Cornelius scarcely slept; for the moment when the points were about to open was one of supreme importance.

Two days later Rosa announced that they were open.

"Open, Rosa!" cried Cornelius, "the involucre is open! But in that case, do you see, can you make out —"

Here the prisoner paused, gasping for breath.

"Yes," answered Rosa; "I can already make out a thread of different color, as thin as a hair."

"And its color?" asked Cornelius, trembling.

"Oh," answered Rosa, "it is very deep."

"Brown?"

"Deeper than that."

"Deeper, good Rosa, deeper? Thank Heaven! Deep as ebony? deep as —"

"Black as the ink with which I wrote to you."

Cornelius uttered a cry of mad joy.

Then suddenly stopping and clasping his hands, he said, —

"Oh, there is not an angel in heaven to be compared to you, Rosa!"

"Really!" said Rosa, smiling at his exaltation.

"Rosa, you have worked with such ardor; you have done so much for me! Rosa, my tulip is about to flower, and its flower will be black! Rosa, Rosa, you are the most perfect of God's creatures!"

"Next to the tulip, you mean."

"Ah, be quiet, you rogue, be quiet, and in pity's name

do not spoil my pleasure! But tell me, Rosa, as the tulip is so far advanced, it will flower in two or three days at the latest?"

"To-morrow, or the day after."

"Ah, and I shall not see it!" cried Cornelius, starting back; "I shall not kiss it, as a wonderful work of the Almighty which one should adore, — as I kiss your hand and your cheek, Rosa, when by chance they are near the grating."

Rosa advanced her cheek, not by chance, but by design, and the young man's lips eagerly fastened upon it.

"Faith, I will cut it, if you say so."

"Oh, no, no, Rosa! When it is open, place it carefully in the shade, and immediately send a message to Harlem to give notice to the president of the Horticultural Society that the great black tulip is in flower. I know it is far to Harlem; but with money you will find a messenger. Have you any money, Rosa?"

Rosa smiled.

"Oh, yes!" she said.

"Enough?" asked Cornelius.

"I have three hundred florins."

"Oh, if you have three hundred, you must not send a messenger, but you must go to Harlem yourself, — yourself, Rosa!"

"But what is to become of the flower meanwhile?"

"Oh, the flower you must take with you; for you understand that you must not let it out of your sight for an instant."

"But in keeping sight of the tulip I lose sight of you, Mynheer Cornelius."

"Ah, that's true, my dear, sweet Rosa. Oh, my God,

how wicked men are! What have I done to them, and why have they deprived me of my liberty? You are right, Rosa, — I cannot live without you. Well, you will send some one to Harlem; that 's settled. Upon my soul, it 's enough of a miracle for the president to put himself to some trouble! He will come himself to Lœwestein to see the tulip."

Then suddenly checking himself, he murmured, with a faltering voice, —

"Rosa, Rosa, suppose it should not be black, after all?"

"Oh, you will know surely to-morrow or the day after, in the evening."

"To have to wait until evening to know it, Rosa! I shall die with impatience. Could we not agree about a signal?"

"I will do better than that."

"What will you do?"

"If it opens at night, I will come and tell you myself; if it is in the daytime, I will pass your door, and slip a note either under the door or through the grating during the time between my father's first and second visit."

"Oh, yes, let us leave it so, Rosa! To learn the glad news by a word from *you* will be a double happiness."

"There, it 's ten o'clock," said Rosa, "and I must leave you."

"Yes, yes!" said Cornelius; "go, Rosa, go!"

Rosa withdrew, almost sadly; for Cornelius had all but sent her away.

To be sure he did it so that she might watch over the black tulip!

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE BLOOMING OF THE FLOWER.

CORNELIUS passed a pleasant night, but one of great excitement. Every instant he fancied he heard the gentle voice of Rosa calling him. He would awake with a start, rush to the door, and put his face to the grating; but no one was behind it, and the corridor was empty.

Rosa, no doubt, was watching too; but, more fortunate than he, she was watching over the tulip; she had before her eyes that noble flower, that wonder of wonders, which not only was unknown theretofore, but was even thought impossible of attainment.

What would the world say, when it was known that the black tulip was found, that it existed, and that it was the prisoner Van Baerle who had found it?

How Cornelius would have spurned the offer of his liberty in exchange for his tulip!

Day came, without any news; the tulip was not yet in flower.

The day passed like the night; night came, and with it Rosa, joyous and cheerful as a bird.

"Well?" asked Cornelius.

"Well, all is going on prosperously. This night, without any doubt, your tulip will be in flower."

"And will it be black?"

"Black as jet."

"Without a speck of any other color?"

"Without one speck."

"Oh, how kind is Heaven! My dear Rosa, I have been dreaming all night, in the first place, of you" (Rosa made a sign of incredulity), "and then of what we must do."

"Well?"

"Well, this is what I have decided on: the tulip once being in flower, when it is quite certain that it is black, and absolutely black, you must find a messenger."

"If that is all, I have found a messenger already."

"Is he reliable?"

"One for whom I will answer; he is one of my lovers."

"I hope not Jacob."

"No, never fear; it is the ferryman of Lœwestein, — a smart young fellow of twenty-five or six."

"The devil!"

"Don't be alarmed," laughed Rosa; "he is still under age, for you yourself fixed it at from twenty-six to twenty-eight."

"But do you think you can rely on this young man?"

"As surely as on myself; he would throw himself from his boat into the Waal or the Meuse as I chose, if I bade him."

"Well, Rosa, this lad can be at Harlem in ten hours. You will give me paper and pencil, or better still, pen and ink, and I will write, or rather, on second thoughts, you must, for if I did it, being a poor prisoner, people might, like your father, see a conspiracy in it, — you will write to the president of the Horticultural Society, and I am sure he will come."

"But if he delays?"

"Well, let us suppose that he delays one day, or even two; but it is impossible. A tulip-fancier, such as he is, will not delay one hour, not one minute, not one second, to set out to see the eighth wonder of the world. But, as I said, if he did delay one or even two days, the tulip will still be in its full splendor. The flower having once been seen by the president, and the official report drawn up by him, everything will be complete; you will keep a duplicate of the report, and intrust the tulip to him. Ah, if we had been able to carry it ourselves, Rosa, it would never have left my hands but to pass into yours! But this is a dream which we must not entertain," continued Cornelius, with a sigh; "other eyes will see it flower. Above all, Rosa, before the president has seen it, let it not be seen by any one. The black tulip — Great God, if any one saw the black tulip, it would be stolen!"

"Oh!"

"Did you not tell me yourself what you apprehended from your love-sick Jacob? People will steal one florin, why not a hundred thousand?"

"I will watch, never fear!"

"But suppose it opened while you are here?"

"The capricious creature would indeed be quite capable of it," said Rosa.

"And if on your return you find it open?"

"Well?"

"Oh, Rosa, whenever it opens, remember that not a moment must be lost in letting the president know."

"And you as well. Yes, I understand."

Rosa heaved a sigh, entirely without bitterness, but like

a woman who at last begins to comprehend the weakness of one she loves, even though she cannot accustom herself to it.

"Now I am going back to your tulip, Mynheer Van Baerle, and the instant it opens you shall be informed; and then the messenger can start at once."

"Oh, Rosa, Rosa, I 'm sure I don't know to what one of all the marvels of heaven or earth to liken you!"

"Liken me to the black tulip, Mynheer Cornelius, and I shall feel highly flattered, I assure you. Now we must say *au revoir*, Mynheer Cornelius."

"Oh, say, '*Au revoir*, my friend!'"

"*Au revoir*, my friend," said Rosa, somewhat comforted.

"Say, 'My beloved friend!'"

"Oh, my friend —"

"Beloved, Rosa, I entreat you! Beloved, beloved, am I not?"

"Beloved? Yes, — beloved," said Rosa, almost lightheaded with joy.

"And now that you have said 'beloved,' dear Rosa, say also 'most happy;' say 'happier and more blessed than ever man was under the sun.' I only lack one thing, Rosa."

"And that is?"

"Your cheek, — your fresh cheek, your soft, rosy cheek. Oh, Rosa, give it me of your own free will, and not by chance. Ah!"

The prisoner's prayer ended in a sigh of ecstasy; his lips met those of the maiden, — not by chance, nor by stratagem, but as Saint-Preux's were to meet the lips of Julie a hundred years later.

Rosa made her escape.

Cornelius stood with his heart upon his lips, and his face glued to the wicket in the door.

He was fairly choking with happiness and joy. He opened his window, and gazed long, with swelling heart, at the cloudless vault of heaven, and the moon, which shone like silver upon the two-fold stream flowing from far beyond the hills. He filled his lungs with the pure, sweet air, while his brain dwelt upon thoughts of happiness, and his heart overflowed with gratitude and religious fervor.

"Oh, Thou art always watching from on high, my God," he cried half prostrate, his glowing eyes fixed upon the stars; "forgive me, that I almost doubted Thy existence during these latter days, for Thou didst hide Thy face behind the clouds, and wert for a moment lost to my sight, O Thou merciful God, Thou pitying Father everlasting! But to-day, this evening, and to-night, again I see Thee in all Thy wondrous glory in the mirror of Thy heavenly abode, and more clearly still in the mirror of my grateful heart."

He was well again, the poor invalid; the wretched captive was free once more.

During part of the night Cornelius remained at his barred window, with ear on the alert, and his five senses all concentrated in one, or rather in two, for he used his eyes while he was listening.

He gazed at the stars, and listened for sounds on earth.

From time to time he turned his eyes toward the corridor.

"There," he would say, "is Rosa, — Rosa, watching as

I am, and like me waiting from moment to moment. There, under her eyes, is the mysterious flower, which is alive, is peeping out from its bud, nay, is opening; perhaps at this very moment Rosa is holding the stem of the tulip in her soft, warm fingers. Touch the stem gently, Rosa! Perhaps she is touching the half-opened calyx with her lips. Breathe carefully upon it, Rosa, dear Rosa, for your lips may burn it! Perhaps at this instant my two loves are kissing each other, with only God to see."

At that moment a star blazed up in the southern heaven, shot across the intervening space, and seemed to fall upon Lœwestein.

Cornelius was startled.

"Ah," said he, "it is God sending a soul to enter into my flower!"

And as if he had guessed aright, almost at the same instant the prisoner heard a step in the corridor light as a fairy's, and the rustling of a dress which sounded like the beating of a bird's wings; and a well-known voice said, —

"Cornelius, my friend, my dearly beloved and happy friend, come, come quickly!"

Cornelius took only one step from the window to the door, and again his lips encountered the lips of Rosa, who whispered as she kissed him, —

"It has opened, and is as black as night; here it is."

"What! here?" cried Cornelius, taking away his lips.

"Yes, yes! I had to run a little risk for the sake of a great pleasure. Here it is, see! Take it."

With one hand she raised to the height of the wicket a little dark lantern; then she showed the light, while with

the other hand she raised the marvellous tulip to the same height.

Cornelius gave a great cry, and felt as if he must swoon.

"Oh, my God, my God," he murmured, "how dost Thou recompense me for my loss of freedom, innocent though I be, in vouchsafing me two such flowers at the wicket of my cell!"

"Kiss it," said Rosa, "as I kissed it but this moment."

Cornelius, hardly daring to breathe, touched the tip of the flower with his lips; and never did kiss upon woman's lips, even though they were such lips as Rosa's, touch the heart so deeply.

The tulip was lovely, magnificent, superb; its stalk was more than eighteen inches high; it grew from the folds of four green leaves, slender and straight as lance-shafts; and the whole of the flower was as black and shining as jet.

"Rosa," said Cornelius, whose breath came quickly, — "Rosa, we have not a moment to lose; the letter must be written."

"It is all written, my beloved Cornelius," replied Rosa.

"Really?"

"While the tulip was opening I wrote it myself, for I did not wish to lose a moment. Here is the letter; tell me whether you approve of it."

Cornelius took the letter, and read, in a handwriting which was much improved even since the little note he had received from Rosa, as follows: —

MYNHEER PRESIDENT, — The black tulip is about to open, perhaps in ten minutes. As soon as it is open I shall send a messenger to you to entreat you to come in person and see it here at the fortress of Lœwestein. I am the daughter of the jailer Gryphus, and almost as much a prisoner as the prisoners of my father. I cannot, therefore, bring you this marvel. This is the reason why I venture to beg you to come and see it yourself.

It is my wish that it should be called "Rosa Barlænsis."

It has opened; it is perfectly black; come, Mynheer President, come!

I have the honor to be your humble servant,

ROSA GRYPHUS.

"That's splendid, dear Rosa, splendid! Your letter is admirable! I could never have written it with such simplicity. You will give the committee all the information that is asked of you. They will then know how the tulip has been grown; how much care and anxiety and how many sleepless nights it has cost. But now, not a moment must be lost, Rosa. The messenger, the messenger!"

"What is the president's name?"

"Give me the letter, I will direct it. Oh, he is very well known; he is Mynheer van Systens, the burgomaster of Harlem; give it me, Rosa, give it me."

And with a trembling hand, Cornelius wrote upon the letter, —

"To Mynheer Peters van Systens, Burgomaster, and President of the Horticultural Society of Harlem."

"Now, go, Rosa, go," said Cornelius, "and let us implore the protection of God, who has so kindly watched over us until now."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE ENVIOUS MAN.

In truth, the poor young people were in great need of the direct protection and care of the Lord.

They had never been so near the destruction of their hopes as at this moment, when they thought themselves certain of their happiness.

We have too much faith in the intelligence of our readers to doubt that they long ago recognized in Jacob our old friend, or rather enemy, Isaac Boxtel.

Therefore the reader has guessed, no doubt, that this worthy had followed from the Buytenhof to Lœwestein the object of his love and the object of his hatred, — the black tulip and Cornelius van Baerle.

What no one but a tulip-fancier, and an envious tulip-fancier at that, could have discovered, — the existence of the bulbs and the prisoner's ambition, — envy had enabled Boxtel, if not to discover, at least to imagine.

We have seen him, more successful under the name of Jacob than under that of Isaac, gain the friendship of Gryphus, whose gratitude and hospitality he watered for several months with the best gin ever distilled from the Texel to Antwerp.

He lulled the suspicion of the jailer, for we have seen how suspicious old Gryphus was; he set his suspicions at rest by flattering him with the idea of a marriage with Rosa.

Moreover, he fondled his jailer's instinct, while he flattered his paternal ambition, by painting in the blackest colors the learned prisoner whom Gryphus had in his keeping, and who, according to the *soi-disant* Jacob, had entered into a league with Satan to destroy his Highness the Prince of Orange.

At first he had also made some way with Rosa; not, indeed, by arousing any sympathetic feeling, for Rosa was far from being in love with him, but because, by talking to her of marriage and of love, he had put to flight all the suspicions which he might otherwise have excited.

We have seen how his imprudence in following Rosa into the garden had unmasked him in the eyes of the young damsel, and how the instinctive fears of Cornelius had put the two lovers on their guard against him.

The reader will remember that the prisoner's anxiety was principally aroused by what Rosa had told him of Jacob's fit of passion against Gryphus on account of the bulb he crushed. At that moment Boxtel's exasperation was the greater because, though suspecting that Cornelius possessed a second bulb, he was by no means sure of it.

From that moment he kept an incessant watch upon Rosa, not only following her into the garden, but in the corridors as well.

Only, as he now followed her in the night and barefooted, he was neither seen nor heard, except on one occasion, when Rosa thought she saw something like a shadow on the staircase.

Her discovery, however, was made too late, as Boxtel had heard from the mouth of the prisoner himself that a second bulb existed.

A victim of the stratagem of Rosa, who had made a pretence of putting it in the bed, and with no doubt that this little farce had been played in order to force him to betray himself, he redoubled his precaution, and employed every means suggested by his crafty nature to continue to spy upon the others without being seen himself.

He saw Rosa conveying a large earthen pot from her father's kitchen to her bedroom.

He saw Rosa washing her pretty little hands, all grimy with the mould which she had kneaded, to give her tulip the best bed possible.

At last he hired, just opposite Rosa's window, a little attic, distant enough not to allow him to be recognized with the naked eye, but sufficiently near to enable him, with the help of his telescope, to watch everything that was going on at Lœwestein in Rosa's room, just as at Dort he had watched everything that took place in Cornelius's drying-room.

He had not been installed more than three days in his attic before all his doubts were removed.

At early dawn the flower-pot was in the window; and like the charming female figures of Mieris and Metzys, Rosa would appear at the window as in a frame, formed by the first budding sprays of the virgin's bower and the honeysuckle.

Rosa watched the flower-pot with an interest which betrayed to Boxtel the real value of the object inclosed in it.

The object in the pot must be the second bulb; that is to say, the prisoner's last reliance.

When the nights threatened to be too cold, Rosa took in the flower-pot.

This was in accordance with the instructions of Cornelius, who was afraid of the bulb being killed by frost.

When the sun became too hot, Rosa likewise took in the pot from eleven in the morning until two in the afternoon.

Another one of Cornelius's injunctions, for he was afraid that the soil would become too dry.

But when the point of the bud appeared above the earth, Boxtel was fully convinced; and it had not grown to the height of an inch before, thanks to his telescope, the envious fellow's last doubts vanished.

Cornelius possessed two bulbs, and the second was intrusted to the love and care of Rosa.

For it may well be imagined that the tender secret of the two lovers had not escaped the prying curiosity of Boxtel.

The question, therefore, was how to find means to wrest the second bulb from the tender care of Rosa, and the affection of Cornelius.

But this was no easy task.

Rosa watched over her tulip as a mother over her child; yes, more sedulously even than a mother, — she was as devoted as a dove who is hatching her eggs.

Rosa never left her room during the day, and more than that, strange to say, she no longer left it in the evening.

For seven days Boxtel watched Rosa to no purpose; she was always at her post.

These were the seven days of misunderstanding, which made Cornelius so unhappy, depriving him at the same time of all news of Rosa and of his tulip.

Would the coolness between Rosa and Cornelius last forever? This would have made the theft much more difficult than Mynheer Isaac had at first expected.

We say the theft, for Isaac had very easily adopted the plan of stealing the tulip. And as it was being reared in the most profound secrecy; as the two young people were keeping it from all the world; as the word of a well-known tulip-fancier would be believed as against that of a maiden who was utterly ignorant of all the minutiæ of horticulture, or of a prisoner undergoing sentence for high treason, and who could hardly be heard from the depths of his dungeon, even though he should protest; moreover, as he would be in possession of the tulip, which fact, in the matter of chattels, carries a presumption of right, — he could not fail to obtain the prize, and to be crowned with honor instead of Cornelius; and then the tulip, instead of being called "Tulipa nigra Barlænsis," would go down to posterity under the name of "Tulipa nigra Boxtellensis" or "Boxtellea."

Mynheer Isaac had not yet quite decided which of these two names he would give to the tulip; but as both meant the same thing, this was not the point of the utmost importance.

That point was to steal the tulip.

Now, in order that Boxtel might steal the tulip, it was necessary that Rosa should leave her room.

Great, therefore, was the joy of Jacob, or Isaac, as you choose, when he saw the usual evening meetings of the lovers resumed.

He first of all took advantage of Rosa's absence to make a careful examination of the door of her chamber. The door fitted tightly, and the key had to be turned

twice in the lock, which was, however, a simple one; but no one save Rosa had a key.

Boxtel at first thought of stealing her key; but not only was it exceedingly difficult to rummage in her pocket, but when she perceived her loss, she would have her lock changed, and would not leave her room until it was done. So that he would have committed a crime for nothing.

He thought it, therefore, better to employ a different expedient. He collected as many keys as he could, and tried all of them during one of those delightful hours which Rosa and Cornelius passed together at the wicket in the cell-door.

Two of the keys would enter the lock, and one of them would turn once, but not the second time.

There was, therefore, only a slight change to be made in this key.

Boxtel covered it with a slight coat of wax, and tried again, when the obstacle which prevented the key from being turned a second time left its impression on the wax.

Boxtel had only to follow that impression with a file as thin as the blade of a knife.

In two more days his key fitted perfectly.

Rosa's door thus opened without noise and without the use of force, and Boxtel found himself in the maiden's chamber, *tête-à-tête* with the tulip.

His first guilty act had been to climb over a wall in order to dig up the tulip; the second, to introduce himself into Cornelius's drying-room through an open window; and the third to enter Rosa's room by means of a false key.

Thus envy urged Boxtel on with rapid steps in the career of crime.

Boxtel, as we have said, was alone with the tulip.

A common thief would have taken the pot under his arm, and carried it off.

But Boxtel was not a common thief, and he reflected.

He reflected as he gazed upon the tulip, by the light of his dark lantern, that it was not yet sufficiently forward for him to be absolutely certain that the flower would be black, although present appearances made it more than probable.

He reflected that if its flower were not black, or if the black were not spotless, he would have made himself a thief to no purpose.

He reflected that the report of the theft would spread, that suspicion would fall upon him after what had taken place in the garden, that search would be made, and that no matter how well it might be hidden, the tulip might be found.

He reflected that if he hid the tulip so that it could not be found, it might be injured in all the changes of place which it would have to undergo.

Finally he concluded that it would be better, since he had the key of Rosa's chamber, and might enter whenever he liked, to wait for the blooming, and to take it either an hour before or after it opened, and to start on the instant for Harlem, where the tulip would be before the judges before any one else could lay claim to it.

Then it would be for Boxtel to charge the one who claimed it after that with theft.

This was a deep-laid scheme, and quite worthy of its author.

Thus, every evening during that delightful hour which the two lovers passed together at the wicket, Boxtel entered the maiden's chamber to watch the progress which the black tulip was making toward flowering.

On the evening at which we have arrived, he made his preparations to go in as usual; but the young people, as we have seen, only exchanged a few words before Cornelius sent Rosa back to watch over the tulip.

Seeing Rosa enter her room ten minutes after she had left it, Boxtel guessed that the tulip had opened, or was about to open.

During that night, therefore, the great blow was to be struck; so Boxtel presented himself at Gryphus's door with a double supply of gin, — that is to say, with a bottle in each pocket.

Gryphus being once tipsy, Boxtel was very nearly master of the house.

At eleven o'clock Gryphus was dead drunk. At two in the morning Boxtel saw Rosa leaving the chamber; but she held in her arms something which she carried with great care.

He did not doubt that this was the black tulip in flower.

But what was she going to do with it? Did she propose to start for Harlem with it herself on the instant?

It was not possible that a young girl would undertake such a journey alone during the night.

Was she only going to show the tulip to Cornelius? This was more likely.

He followed Rosa with bare feet, and walking on tiptoe.

He saw her approach the wicket.

He heard her calling Cornelius.

By the light of the dark-lantern he saw the tulip in full flower, and as black as the darkness in which he was hidden.

He heard the plan concerted between Cornelius and Rosa to send a messenger to Harlem. He saw the lips of the lovers meet, and then heard Cornelius send Rosa away.

He saw Rosa extinguish the light, and return to her chamber. Ten minutes later he saw her leave the room again, and close the door carefully, and turn the key twice.

Boxtel, who saw all this from his hiding-place on the landing-place of the staircase above Rosa's apartment, descended a step from his for every one that Rosa descended from hers; so that when her light foot touched the lowest step of the staircase, Boxtel touched, with a still lighter hand, the lock of Rosa's chamber.

And in that hand, it must be understood, he held the false key, which opened Rosa's door as easily as did the real one.

And that is why, at the beginning of the chapter, we said that the poor young people were in great need of the direct protection of the Lord.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### IN WHICH THE BLACK TULIP CHANGES MASTERS.

Cornelius remained standing on the spot where Rosa had left him, almost overpowered by the twofold weight of his happiness.

Half an hour passed away. The first rosy streaks of dawn were beginning to make their way through the bars of Cornelius's window when he was suddenly startled to hear steps coming hurriedly up the staircase, and cries approaching nearer and nearer.

Almost at the same instant his gaze fell upon the pale and distracted face of Rosa.

He recoiled, himself turning pale with fright.

"Cornelius, Cornelius!" she screamed, gasping for breath.

"For God's sake, what is it?" asked the prisoner.

"Cornelius! the tulip —"

"Well?"

"Oh, how can I tell you?"

"Speak, speak, Rosa!"

"Some one has taken it from us, — some one has stolen it!"

"Some one has taken it from us, — some one has stolen it?" shrieked Cornelius.

"Yes," said Rosa, leaning against the door to support herself; "yes, taken, stolen!"

In spite of her efforts, her limbs failed her, and she fell on her knees.

"But how? Tell me, explain to me!"

"Oh, it is not my fault, my friend."

Poor Rosa! she no longer dared to call him "My beloved."

"You must have left it alone," exclaimed Cornelius, ruefully.

"One minute only, to go and tell our messenger, who lives scarcely fifty yards off, on the banks of the Waal."

"And during that time, notwithstanding all my injunctions, you left the key in the door, unfortunate child!"

"No, no, no! that is what I cannot understand. The key was never out of my hands; I clenched it as if I were afraid it would take wings."

"But how did it happen, then?"

"Ah, if I only knew myself! I had given the letter to my messenger; he started before I left his house; I came home, and my door was locked; everything in my room was as I had left it, except the tulip, — that was gone. Some one must have found a key to my room, or have got a false one made."

Rosa was suffocating, and her tears choked her utterance.

Cornelius, standing motionless and with distorted features, heard almost without understanding, and only muttered, —

"Stolen, stolen, stolen! I am lost!"

"Oh, Cornelius, forgive me, forgive me, or it will kill me!" cried Rosa.

At her despairing cry, Cornelius seized the iron bars of the wicket, and shook them like a madman, crying, —

"Rosa, Rosa, we have been robbed, it is true, but shall we confess ourselves beaten for that? No, no; it is a great calamity, but perhaps not irreparable, Rosa, for we know the thief!"

"Alas, how can I say that I am positive about it?"

"Oh, but I say myself that it is that infamous Jacob. Shall we allow him to carry to Harlem the fruit of our labor, the fruit of our sleepless nights, the child of our love? Rosa, we must pursue him, we must overtake him!"

"But how can we do all this, my friend, without letting my father know that we were in communication with each other? How could I, a poor girl, with so little freedom and so little knowledge of the world and its ways, hope to do what you might fail in yourself?"

"Rosa, Rosa, open this door, and you will see whether I can do it; you will see if I do not discover the thief; you will see if I do not make him confess his crime; you will see if I do not make him beg for mercy!"

"Alas!" cried Rosa, sobbing bitterly, "can I open the door for you; have I the keys? If I had had them, would not you have been free long ago?"

"Your father has them, — your wicked father, the cruel headsman, who has already beheaded the first bulb of my tulip. Oh, the wretch, the wretch! he is Jacob's accomplice!"

"Don't speak so loud, for Heaven's sake!"

"Oh, Rosa, if you don't open the door for me," Cornelius cried in a frenzy of passion, "I will break through these bars, and kill everybody in the prison!"

"Oh, my friend, in pity's name, be calm!"

"I tell you, Rosa, that I will demolish this prison, stone for stone."

The wretched man, whose strength was increased tenfold by his rage, began to shake the door with a great noise, little heeding the echoes of his thundering tones in the reverberating spiral staircase.

Rosa, in her fright, made vain attempts to check this furious outbreak.

"I tell you that I will kill that infamous Gryphus!" roared Cornelius; "I tell you I will shed his blood, as he did that of my black tulip!"

The wretched prisoner was really beginning to go mad.

"Well, then, yes," said Rosa, all in a tremble; "yes, yes, only be quiet. Yes, I will take his keys, I will open the door for you! Yes, only be quiet, my dear Cornelius."

She did not finish her speech, as a growl by her side interrupted her.

"Father!" cried Rosa.

"Gryphus!" roared Van Baerle, "Oh, you villain!"

Old Gryphus, in the midst of all the noise, had ascended the staircase without being heard.

He seized his daughter roughly by the wrist.

"Oho! so you will take my keys?" he said in a voice choked with rage. "So this infernal scoundrel, this monster, this gallows-bird of a conspirator, is your dear Cornelius, is he? So you are in communication with prisoners of State! Oh, very good! very good, indeed!"

Rosa wrung her hands in despair.

"Aha!" Gryphus continued, passing from the madness of anger to the cool irony of a man who has the

upper hand, — "aha, my innocent tulip-fancier! aha, my gentle scholar! so you will kill me, and drink my blood, will you? Very good! nothing could be better! And so you have made my daughter your accomplice! Holy Jesus! am I in a den of thieves, — in a cave of brigands? Ah, the governor shall know all this morning, and his Highness the stadtholder to-morrow. We know the law, — 'Whoever stirs up rebellion in the prison,' etc., — Article 6. We shall have a second edition of the Buytenhof, Master Scholar, and a good one this time. Yes, yes, just gnaw your paws like a bear in his cage; and you, my dear, devour your dear Cornelius with your eyes. I warn you, my pretty lambs, you shall not much longer have the felicity of conspiring together. Away with you, unnatural daughter! And as to you, Master Scholar, *au revoir;* never fear but we shall meet again."

Rosa, mad with terror and despair, threw a kiss to her friend; then, suddenly struck with a bright thought, she rushed toward the staircase, saying, —

"All is not yet lost; rely on me, my Cornelius."

Her father followed her, growling.

As to poor Cornelius, he gradually loosened his hold of the bars, which his fingers still grasped convulsively. His head was heavy, his eyes wandered wildly, and he fell heavily on the floor of his cell muttering, —

"Stolen! it has been stolen from me!"

Meanwhile Boxtel, having left the fortress by the door which Rosa herself had opened, carrying the black tulip wrapped up in a cloak, had thrown himself into a carriage which was waiting for him at Gorcum, and disappeared, having neglected for reasons easy to understand to inform his friend Gryphus of his sudden departure.

And now that we have seen him into his coach, we will, with the consent of the reader, follow him to the end of his journey.

He proceeded but slowly, as it would be dangerous for a black tulip to travel post.

But Boxtel, fearing that he might not arrive early enough, procured at Delft a box, lined all round with fresh moss, in which he packed the tulip. The flower rested then in so soft a bed, with a supply of air from above, that the coach could now travel full speed without any possibility of injury.

He arrived next morning at Harlem, fatigued but triumphant; and to do away with every trace of the theft, he transplanted the tulip, broke the earthen pot, and threw the pieces into the canal. Then he wrote the president of the Horticultural Society a letter, in which he announced to him that he had just arrived at Harlem with a perfectly black tulip; and with his flower all safe, took up his quarters at a good hotel in the town.

And there he waited.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### PRESIDENT VAN SYSTENS.

Rosa, on leaving Cornelius, had fixed on a plan of action. It was to restore to Cornelius the tulip Jacob had stolen, or never to see him again.

She had seen the despair of the prisoner, twofold in its source, and incurable.

On the one hand, their separation was inevitable, — Gryphus having at the same time surprised the secret of their love and of their stolen meetings.

On the other hand, all Van Baerle's ambitious hopes were crushed; and he had been nursing them for seven years.

Rosa was one of those women who are dejected by trifles, but who, with a vast reserve of strength to meet overwhelming misfortune, find even in the misfortune itself the energy to struggle against or the means of repairing it.

The maiden returned to her room, and cast a last glance around to see whether she had not been mistaken, and whether the tulip was not stowed away in some corner where it had escaped her notice; but she sought in vain, — the tulip was still absent; it was indeed stolen.

Rosa made up a little parcel of such articles of clothing as were indispensable, took her three hundred florins of

savings, — that is to say, all her fortune, — took the third bulb from among her lace, where she had buried it, and carefully hid it in her bosom; then she locked her door with a double turn, so as to delay the discovery of her flight for at least so long a time as would be necessary to force the door, went down the stairs, left the prison by the same door which an hour before had given egress to Boxtel, and went to a stable-keeper and asked him to let a carriage to her.

The man had only a spring-cart; and this was the vehicle which Boxtel had hired the evening before, and in which he was now on his way to Delft.

We say on his way to Delft, for it is necessary to make a tremendous *détour* going from Lœwestein to Harlem; as the crow flies, it is not more than half the distance.

But none but birds can fly as the crow flies in Holland, — a country which is more cut up by rivers and brooks and streams and canals than any other in the world.

Not being able to procure a vehicle, Rosa was therefore obliged to take a horse, — about which there was no difficulty, as the stable-keeper knew her to be the daughter of the keeper of the fortress.

Rosa hoped to overtake her messenger, — a simple, honest lad, — and take him with her, to serve her as a guide and a protector.

And in fact she had not gone two leagues before she saw him walking at a round pace along the side of a lovely road bordering the river.

She urged her horse to a brisk trot, and soon came up with him.

The honest lad was not aware of the important character of his message; nevertheless he used as much speed

as if he had known it; and in less than an hour he had already gone a league and a half.

Rosa took from him the note, which had now become useless, and explained to him what she wanted him to do for her. He placed himself entirely at her disposal, promising to keep pace with the horse, if Rosa would allow him to lay his hand on the animal's crupper or withers.

The maiden permitted him to rest his hand wherever he chose, so long as he did not interfere with the horse's gait.

The two travellers had been on their way for five hours and made more than eight leagues; and yet Gryphus had not the least suspicion that his daughter had left the fortress.

Moreover, the jailer, who was a malicious fellow at heart, hugged himself with delight to think that he had struck such terror into his daughter's heart.

While he was congratulating himself on having such a fine story to tell his boon companion Jacob, that worthy was on his road to Delft; but thanks to the swiftness of his horse, he had the start of Rosa and her companion by four leagues.

And while the jailer imagined that Rosa was in her chamber, trembling or sulky, Rosa was going farther and farther away from him.

Thus, the prisoner alone was where Gryphus thought him to be.

Rosa had been so little with her father since she had been so devoted to the tulip, that it was not until his dinner hour — that is to say, twelve o'clock — that Gryphus's appetite reminded him that his daughter was sulking rather too long.

He sent one of the turnkeys to call her; and when the man came back and told him that he had called and sought her in vain, he determined to go and call her himself.

He first went to her room; but he had his trouble for his pains, for Rosa answered not.

The locksmith of the fortress was sent for; he opened the door, but Gryphus no more found Rosa within than Rosa had found the tulip.

At that very moment she was entering Rotterdam.

Gryphus therefore had no better success in the kitchen than in her room, and found as little trace of her in the garden as in the kitchen.

The reader may imagine the jailer's anger when, having made inquiries in the neighborhood, he learned that his daughter had hired a horse, and, like Bradamante or Clorinda, had gone off in search of adventure, without saying where she was going.

Gryphus in his fury went back to Van Baerle, abused him, threatened him, knocked all the miserable furniture of his cell about, promised him the darkest of the dark dungeons, and menaced him with starvation and flogging.

Cornelius, without even listening to what his jailer said, allowed himself to be ill-treated, abused, and threatened, remaining all the while sullen, immovable, dead to every emotion and fear.

After having sought for Rosa in every direction, Gryphus looked for Jacob; and as he could not find him any more than he could his daughter, he began at once to suspect that Jacob had carried her off.

The maiden meanwhile, having stopped for two hours at Rotterdam, had started again on her journey. That

evening she slept at Delft, and on the following morning she reached Harlem, four hours after Boxtel had arrived there.

Rosa, first of all, found her way to the house of Master Van Systens, the president of the Horticultural Society.

She found that worthy gentleman in a situation which we must not neglect to describe under pain of proving recreant to every obligation of a painter and a veracious historian.

The president was drawing up a report to the committee of the society.

This report was written on large-sized paper, in the finest handwriting of the president.

Rosa was announced simply as Rosa Gryphus; but her name, sonorous as it was, must have been unknown to the president, for she was refused admission.

Rosa, however, was not disheartened; she had engaged in a certain mission, and had vowed that she would not allow herself to be cast down by rebuff or brutality or insult.

"Say to the president," she said to the servant, "that I have come to speak to him about the black tulip."

These words had as magical an effect as the celebrated "Open Sesame" of the "Arabian Nights;" and, thanks to them, the doors flew open before her, and admitted her to the office of the president, Van Systens, who gallantly rose from his chair to meet her.

He was a slim little man, — a perfect representation of the stem of a flower, of which his head formed the calyx, while his limp arms, hanging by his sides, were like the oblong double leaf of the tulip; a certain rock-

ing motion in his gait completed his resemblance to that flower when it bends before the breeze.

We have said that he was called Mynheer Van Systens.

"Well, young woman," he cried, "your business concerns the black tulip, you say?"

To the president of the Horticultural Society the *Tulipa nigra* was a power of the first rank, which might well, as queen of the tulips, send, representatives to friendly powers.

"Yes, Mynheer," answered Rosa, "I come at least to speak of it."

"Is it doing well?" asked Van Systens, with a smile of tender veneration.

"Alas! Mynheer, I don't know," said Rosa.

"How is that? Has any accident happened to it?"

"A very great one, yes, Mynheer — not to it, but to me."

"What is it?"

"It has been stolen from me."

"The black tulip stolen from you!"

"Yes, Mynheer."

"Do you know the thief?"

"I have my suspicions, but I do not yet dare to accuse any one."

"But that is something which can very easily be ascertained."

"How so?"

"If it has been stolen from you, the thief cannot be far off."

"Why not?"

"Because I saw it only two hours ago."

"You saw the black tulip!" cried Rosa, making an impulsive movement toward Mynheer Van Systens.

"As plainly as I see you, young lady."

"Where was it?"

"In your master's hands, to all appearances."

"In my master's hands!"

"Yes. Are you not in the service of Mynheer Isaac Boxtel?"

"I?"

"You, of course."

"Why, for whom do you take me, Mynheer?"

"Why, for whom do you take me, pray?"

"Mynheer, I trust that I am not mistaken in taking you to be the honorable Mynheer Van Systens, burgomaster of Harlem and president of the Horticultural Society."

"And what did you tell me just now?"

"I told you, sir, that my tulip had been stolen."

"Then your tulip is Mynheer Boxtel's. In that case, my child, you express yourself very badly. The tulip has been stolen, not from you, but from Mynheer Boxtel."

"I repeat to you, Mynheer, that I do not know who this Mynheer Boxtel is, and that I now hear his name for the first time."

"You do not know who Mynheer Boxtel is, and you also had a black tulip?"

"But is there any other besides mine?" asked Rosa, trembling.

"Mynheer Boxtel's, — yes."

"What is it like?"

"It is black, of course."

"Without spot?"

"Without a single spot, — without the least iota of color."

"And you have this tulip, — it has been deposited here?"

"No; but it will be, as I must exhibit it to the committee before the prize is awarded."

"Oh, Mynheer," cried Rosa, "this Boxtel, this Isaac Boxtel, who calls himself the owner of the black tulip —"

"And who is its owner."

"Is he not a very thin man?"

"Yes."

"Bald?"

"Yes."

"With rather wild eyes?"

"I think so."

"Restless, stooping, and bow-legged?"

"In truth you draw Master Boxtel's portrait, feature by feature."

"Mynheer, is the tulip in a pot of white and blue earthenware, with a bunch of yellowish flowers on three sides?"

"Oh, as to that I am not quite sure; I looked more at the man than at the pot."

"Mynheer, it is my tulip; it is the one which has been stolen from me. I come here to lay claim to it in your presence and at your hands."

"Oho!" said Mynheer van Systens, looking at Rosa. "What! you are here to claim Mynheer Boxtel's tulip? Upon my word, you are a cool customer!"

"Mynheer," said Rosa, a little put out by this apos-

trophe, "I do not say that I come to claim Mynheer Boxtel's tulip, but I do say that I am here to claim my own."

"Yours?"

"Yes, the one which I myself planted and raised."

"Well, then, go and find Mynheer Boxtel at the White Swan Inn, and you can then settle matters with him; as for me, considering that the cause seems to me as difficult to judge as that which was brought before the late King Solomon, and that I do not pretend to be as wise as he was, I shall content myself with making my report, establishing the existence of the black tulip, and ordering the hundred thousand florins to be paid to its discoverer. Good-by, my child."

"Oh, Mynheer, Mynheer!" Rosa persisted.

"But, my child," continued Van Systens, "as you are young and pretty, and as you are not entirely abandoned, take my advice. Be prudent in this matter, for we have a court of justice and a prison here at Harlem; and, moreover, we are exceedingly keen on the point of honor where our tulips are concerned. Go, my child, go and find Mynheer Isaac Boxtel at the White Swan Inn."

And Mynheer van Systens, resuming his pen, went on with his interrupted report.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### A MEMBER OF THE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY.

Rosa, bewildered and almost distracted between joy and fear at the thought of the black tulip being found again, started for the White Swan, followed by the boatman, a stout lad from Friesland, who was quite capable of dealing single-handed with ten Boxtels.

He had been made acquainted in the course of the journey with the state of affairs, and was not likely to shrink from any skirmish that might ensue; but he was enjoined if such a thing did occur, to be careful not to harm the tulip.

On arriving in the market-place, Rosa suddenly stopped; she was seized by a sudden thought, as we read in Homer that Minerva seized Achilles by the hair of his head just when his wrath was carrying him beyond all bounds.

"Good heavens!" she muttered to herself, "I have made a grievous blunder; it may be that I have been the ruin of Cornelius, the tulip, and myself. I have given the alarm, and awakened suspicion. I am but a woman; these men may league themselves against me, and then I shall be lost. To be sure, if I am lost, that matters nothing, — but Cornelius and the tulip!"

She reflected for a moment.

"If I seek out this Boxtel and do not know him; if Boxtel is not my friend Jacob, but another fancier, who has also discovered the black tulip on his own account; or if my tulip has been stolen by some other than the one I suspect, or has already passed into the hands of a third person, — if I do not recognize the man, but the tulip only, how shall I prove that it belongs to me?

"On the other hand, if I identify Boxtel as the false Jacob, who knows what will come of it? While we are quarrelling with one another, the tulip will die. Oh, holy Virgin! grant me strength and inspiration; the happiness of my whole life is at stake, — to say nothing of the unhappy captive, who may be breathing his last at this moment."

Having uttered this heartfelt prayer Rosa waited for the inspiration from on high which she had besought.

Meanwhile, a great noise arose at the other end of the market-place. People were running about, doors opening and shutting; Rosa alone was unconscious of all this hubbub among the populace.

"We must return to the president," she muttered.

"Well, then, let us return," said the boatman.

They took the narrow Rue de la Paille, which led them straight to the abode of Mynheer van Systens, who with his best pen and in his finest hand was still at work on his report.

Everywhere on her way Rosa heard of nothing but the black tulip, and the prize of a hundred thousand florins. The news had spread like wildfire through the town.

Rosa had not a little difficulty in penetrating a second time into the office of Mynheer van Systens, who, how-

ever, was again worked upon by the magic name of the black tulip.

But when he recognized Rosa, whom in his own mind he had set down as mad, or even worse, he was angry, and was inclined to send her away.

Rosa, however, clasped her hands, and with that tone of honest truth which finds its way to the hearts of men, —

"For heaven's sake, Mynheer," she said imploringly, "do not turn me away, but listen to what I have to say; and if it be not possible for you to do me justice, at least you will not one day have to reproach yourself before God for having made yourself accessory to a bad action."

Van Systens stamped his foot with vexation; it was the second time that Rosa interrupted him in the midst of a composition which stimulated his vanity, both as burgomaster and as president of the Horticultural Society.

"But my report!" he cried, — "my report on the black tulip!"

"Mynheer," Rosa continued, with the firmness of innocence and truth, "your report on the black tulip will, if you decline to hear me, be based on crime or on falsehood. I implore you, Mynheer, let this Boxtel, whom I assert to be Master Jacob, be brought here before you and me, and I swear before God that I will leave him in undisturbed possession of the tulip, if I do not recognize the flower and its holder."

"Upon my soul! we are getting on," exclaimed Van Systens.

"What do you mean?"

"I ask you what will be proved by your recognizing them?"

"But, surely," said Rosa, at her wit's end, "you are an honest man; just suppose that you were to award the prize to a man for something which he had not produced, but had stolen!"

Rosa's tone seemed to have carried conviction to the heart of Van Systens, and he perhaps would have answered her more gently, when a great noise was heard in the street, which was apparently nothing but the same noise which Rosa had already heard in the market-place in much less volume, but without attaching any importance to it, for it had not even interrupted her fervent prayer.

Loud acclamations shook the house.

Mynheer van Systens listened intently to the shouting, which Rosa had at first deemed not worthy of notice, and which now seemed to her to be hardly more than the ordinary noise of the street.

"What is this?" cried the burgomaster; "what is this? Is it possible, have I heard aright?"

And he rushed towards his anteroom, without thinking any more about Rosa, whom he left in his cabinet.

Scarcely had he reached his anteroom, when he uttered a loud exclamation on seeing his staircase crowded up to the very landing by a multitude of people who accompanied, or rather followed a young man, simply clad in a coat of violet-colored velvet, embroidered with silver, who, with a slow and stately gait, ascended the shining white stone steps.

In his wake followed two officers, one of the navy and the other of the cavalry.

Van Systens, having found his way through his frightened domestics, began to bow almost to the ground before his visitor, who was the cause of all this stir.

"Your Highness!" he cried, "your Highness! Your Highness at my house! A brilliant distinction for my humble abode that can never be effaced!"

"Dear Mynheer van Systens," said William of Orange, with a serenity which, with him, took the place of a smile, "I am a true Hollander; I am fond of water, of beer, and of flowers, — sometimes even of that cheese whose flavor the French esteem so highly; the flower which I prefer to all others is, of course, the tulip. I heard at Leyden that the city of Harlem at last possessed the black tulip; and after having satisfied myself that the report was true, however incredible, I have come to learn all about it from the president of the Horticultural Society."

"Oh, your Highness," said Van Systens, in an ecstasy of gratified pride, "what glory to the Society if its labors are pleasing to your Highness!"

"Have you got the flower here?" said the Prince, who doubtless already regretted having made such a long speech.

"Alas, no, your Highness, I have n't it here!"

"And where is it?"

"Its owner has it."

"Who is he?"

"An honest tulip-grower of Dort."

"From Dort?"

"Yes."

"His name?"

"Boxtel."

"His quarters?"

"At the White Swan; I will send for him, and if, meanwhile, your Highness will condescend so far as to enter my parlor, he will surely make haste to bring his tulip to your Highness, knowing that your Highness is here."

"Very well, send for him."

"Yes, your Highness. But —"

"What is it?"

"Oh, nothing of any consequence, your Highness."

"Everything is of consequence in this world, Mynheer van Systens."

"Well, then, your Highness, if it must be said, a little difficulty has presented itself."

"What difficulty?"

"This tulip has already been claimed by pretenders. To be sure it is worth a hundred thousand florins."

"Do you really mean that a claim has been made?"

"Yes, your Highness, by pretenders, by forgers."

"That is a crime, Mynheer van Systens."

"It is, your Highness."

"And have you any proofs of their guilt?"

"No, your Highness, the guilty woman —"

"The guilty woman, Mynheer?"

"I mean the woman who claims the tulip, your Highness, is here in the next room."

"And what do you think of her, Mynheer van Systens?"

"I think, your Highness, that the bait of a hundred thousand florins may have tempted her."

"And she claims the tulip?"

"Yes, your Highness."

"And what proof does she offer?"

"I was just going to question her when your Highness came in."

"Let us hear what she says, Mynheer van Systens, — let us hear what she says. I am the first magistrate of the country; I will hear the cause and administer justice."

"I have found my King Solomon," said Van Systens, bowing, and indicating his cabinet to the Prince.

His Highness was just going to walk ahead; but suddenly he stopped, and said, —

"Go before me, and call me 'Mynheer.'"

The two then entered the cabinet.

Rosa was still standing at the same place, leaning against the frame of the window, and looking through the glass into the garden.

"Ah, a Frisian girl!" said the Prince, as he observed Rosa's gold brocade head-dress and red petticoat.

At the noise of their footsteps she turned round, but scarcely saw the Prince, who seated himself in the darkest corner of the apartment.

All her attention, as may easily be imagined, was bestowed upon that important person who was called Van Systens, and not upon the humble stranger, who came in behind the master of the house, and was probably nobody of any consequence.

The humble stranger took a book down from the shelf, and made Van Systens a sign to begin the examination forthwith.

Van Systens, also at the suggestion of the young man in the violet coat, sat down too, and almost bursting with pride and delight at the prominent position allotted to *him*, began, —

"My child, you promise to tell me the truth, and the entire truth, concerning this tulip?"

"I promise."

"Well, then, speak before this gentleman; he is one of the members of the Horticultural Society."

"What am I to tell you, Mynheer," said Rosa, "which I have not told you already?"

"Well, what next?"

"I repeat the request which I addressed to you before."

"What is it?"

"That you will order Mynheer Boxtel to come here with his tulip: if I do not recognize it as mine I will say so frankly; but if I do recognize it I will claim it, even if I have to go before his Highness the stadtholder himself with my proofs in my hands."

"You have proofs then, my child?"

"God, who knows the justice of my cause, will furnish them."

Van Systens exchanged a look with the Prince, who since Rosa's first words had seemed to be struggling to remember something, as if it were not the first time that her sweet voice had fallen upon his ear.

An officer went off to fetch Boxtel; and Van Systens, in the meantime, continued his examination.

"Upon what do you base your assertion that you are the real owner of the black tulip?"

"Upon a very simple fact, which is that I planted and raised it in my own chamber."

"In your chamber? Where was your chamber?"

"At Lœwestein."

"You are from Lœwestein?"

"I am the daughter of the jailer of the fortress."

The prince made a little movement, as much as to say, —

"Ah! that's it, I remember now."

And all the while pretending to be absorbed in his book, he watched Rosa with even more attention than before.

"And you are fond of flowers?" continued Mynheer Van Systens.

"Yes, Mynheer."

"Then you are an experienced florist?"

Rosa hesitated a moment; then in a voice which spoke from the depth of her heart, she said, —

"Gentlemen, I am speaking to men of honor?"

Her tone was so honest that Van Systens and the prince answered simultaneously by an affirmative movement of their heads.

"Well, then, no; it is not I who am an experienced florist. No; I am only a poor girl of the people, — a poor Frisian peasant-girl, who three months ago knew neither how to read nor write; no, the black tulip was not discovered by myself."

"By whom, pray, was it discovered?"

"By a poor prisoner at Lœwestein."

"By a prisoner at Lœwestein?" repeated the prince.

At the sound of his voice Rosa in her turn was startled.

"It must have been by a prisoner of State, then?" continued the prince, "for there are none but prisoners of State at Lœwestein."

Having said this, he began to read again, at least in appearance.

"Yes," murmured Rosa, with a faltering voice, — "yes, by a prisoner of State."

Van Systens trembled as he heard such a confession made in the presence of such a witness.

"Continue," said William, coldly, to the president of the Horticultural Society.

"Ah, Mynheer," said Rosa, addressing the person whom she thought to be her real judge, "I am about to accuse myself of a very serious offence."

"Certainly," said Van Systens, "the prisoners of State ought to be kept in secret confinement at Lœwestein."

"Alas! Mynheer."

"And from what you tell me it would seem that you took advantage of your position as daughter of the jailer to communicate with a prisoner of State about the cultivation of flowers."

"Yes, Mynheer," Rosa murmured in dismay; "yes, I am bound to confess I saw him every day."

"Unfortunate girl!" exclaimed Van Systens.

The prince observing the fright of Rosa and the pallor of the president, raised his head, and said, in his clear and decided tone, —

"This does not concern the members of the Horticultural Society; they have to pass upon the matter of the black tulip, and have nothing to do with political offences. Go on, young woman, go on."

Van Systens, by an eloquent glance, offered in the name of all tulips his thanks to the new member of the Horticultural Society.

Rosa, reassured by this gleam of encouragement which the stranger held out to her, related all that had happened for the last three months, — all that she had done and all that she had suffered. She described the cruelty of Gryphus, the destruction of the first bulb, the grief of

the prisoner, the precautions taken to insure the success of the second bulb, the prisoner's patience and his agony during their separation,— how he almost starved himself because he had no news of his tulip,— his joy when she went to see him again, and, lastly, their common despair when they found that the tulip, which had flowered so successfully, was stolen just one hour after it had opened.

All this was detailed with an accent of truth, which although producing no change in the impassive demeanor of the prince, did not fail to make an impression on Van Systens.

"But," said the prince, "you can only have known the prisoner a short time."

Rosa opened her great eyes and looked at the stranger, who drew back into the dark corner, as if he wished to escape her observation.

"Why so, Mynheer?" she asked.

"Because it is not yet four months since the jailer Gryphus and his daughter were removed to Lœwestein."

"True, Mynheer."

"And unless you solicited the transfer of your father, in order that you might follow some prisoner who was transferred from the Hague to Lœwestein —"

"Mynheer!" said Rosa, blushing.

"Finish what you have to say," said William.

"I confess that I knew the prisoner at the Hague."

"Happy prisoner!" said William, smiling.

At this moment the officer who had been sent for Boxtel returned, and announced to the prince that the person whom he had been to seek was following at his heels *with* his tulip.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE THIRD BULB.

Boxtel's coming was scarcely announced when that individual in person entered the parlor of Mynheer van Systens, followed by two men who carried in a box the precious burden, and deposited it on a table.

The prince on being informed left the cabinet, passed into the parlor, admired the flower, but said nothing, and silently resumed his seat in the dark corner, where he had himself placed his chair.

Rosa, trembling, pale, and terrified, waited until she should be invited in her turn to see the tulip.

She heard Boxtel's voice.

"It is he!" she exclaimed.

The prince made her a sign to go and look through the open door into the parlor.

"It is my tulip," cried Rosa; "I recognize it. Oh, my poor Cornelius!"

She burst into tears.

The prince rose from his seat, and went to the door, where he stood a moment in the light.

As Rosa's eyes rested upon him, she felt more than ever convinced that this was not the first time she had seen the stranger.

"Master Boxtel," said the prince, "come in here, if you please."

Boxtel eagerly approached, and found himself face to face with William of Orange.

"His Highness!" he cried, recoiling a step.

"His Highness!" Rosa repeated, in dismay.

Hearing this exclamation on his left, Boxtel turned round, and perceived Rosa.

At sight of her the whole frame of the envious fellow shook as if he had touched a voltaic battery.

"Ah," muttered the prince to himself, "he is confused!"

But Boxtel, making a violent effort at self-control, had already mastered his emotion.

"Well, Mynheer Boxtel," said William, "you seem to have discovered the secret of the black tulip?"

"Yes, your Highness," answered Boxtel, in a voice which still betrayed some confusion.

To be sure his confusion might have been attributable to the emotion which the man must have felt on suddenly recognizing William.

"But," continued the prince, "here is a young woman who also pretends to have discovered it."

Boxtel smiled, and shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

William watched all his movements with evident interest and curiosity.

"Then you don't know this young woman?" said the prince.

"No, your Highness."

"And you, young woman, do you know Mynheer Boxtel?"

"No, I don't know Mynheer Boxtel; but I know Mynheer Jacob."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that at Lœwestein the man who here calls himself Isaac Boxtel went by the name of Jacob."

"What do you say to that, Mynheer Boxtel?"

"I say that this young woman lies, your Highness."

"Do you deny having ever been at Lœwestein?"

Boxtel hesitated; the fixed and searching glance of the keen eye of the prince stopped the lie on his lips.

"I cannot deny having been at Lœwestein, your Highness; but I deny having stolen the tulip."

"You did steal it, and from my room," cried Rosa, with indignation.

"I deny it."

"Now listen to me: Do you deny having followed me into the garden on the day when I prepared the bed where I intended to plant it? Do you deny having followed me into the garden when I pretended to plant it? Do you deny that on that evening, after I had gone, you rushed to the spot where you hoped to find the bulb? Do you deny having dug in the ground with your hands? — but, thank God, in vain, for it was only a stratagem to discover your intentions. Say, do you deny all this?"

Boxtel did not deem it best to reply to these several questions; but turning to the prince, he said, —

"I have now for twenty years grown tulips at Dort; I have even acquired some reputation in the art. One of my hybrids is entered in the catalogue under the name of an illustrious personage. I dedicated it to the King of Portugal. This is the truth of the matter: This girl knew that I had produced the black tulip, and in concert with a lover of hers in the fortress of Lœwestein she formed the plan of ruining me, by appropriating to her-

self the prize of a hundred thousand florins which I hope to win, thanks to your justice."

"Oh!" said Rosa, beside herself with anger.

"Silence!" said the prince.

Then, turning to Boxtel, he said, —

"And who is that prisoner whom you allege to be the lover of this young woman?"

Rosa nearly swooned; for Cornelius had been recommended by the prince to the special surveillance of the jailer as a dangerous criminal.

Nothing could have been more agreeable to Boxtel than this question.

"Who is this prisoner, did you ask?" said he. "This prisoner is a man whose name in itself will prove to your Highness what trust you may place in his good faith and honor. He is a State criminal who was once condemned to death."

"And his name?"

Rosa hid her face in her hands with a despairing gesture.

"His name is Cornelius van Baerle," said Boxtel, "and he is godson of that villain Cornelius de Witt."

The prince started; his calm eye flashed, and a death-like paller spread over his impassive features.

He went up to Rosa, and with a motion of his finger ordered her to remove her hands from her face.

Rosa obeyed, as if under mesmeric influence, without having seen the sign.

"It was then to follow this man that you came to me at Leyden to solicit the transfer of your father?"

Rosa hung her head, and in a stifled and almost inaudible voice murmured, —

"Yes, your Highness."

"Go on," said the prince to Boxtel.

"I have nothing more to say," Isaac continued. "Your Highness knows all. But there is one thing which I did not intend to say, because I did not wish to make this girl blush for her ingratitude. I came to Lœwestein because I had business there. I made the acquaintance of old Gryphus, and falling in love with his daughter, made an offer of marriage to her; and not being rich, I committed the imprudence of mentioning to them my hope of gaining a hundred thousand florins, and to justify my hope, I showed them the black tulip. Then, as her lover had made a pretence of growing tulips at Dort, to divert suspicion from his political intrigues, the two together plotted my ruin.

"On the eve of the day when the flower was expected to open, the tulip was carried off from my quarters by this young woman to her room, whence I had the good luck to recover it, at the very moment when she had the impudence to despatch a messenger to announce to the members of the Horticultural Society that she had produced the great black tulip. But she did not stop there. There is no doubt that during the few hours which she kept the flower in her room she showed it to some persons, whom she may now call as witnesses. But fortunately your Highness has now been warned against this imposter and her witnesses."

"Oh, my God, my God, what infamous falsehoods!" said Rosa, bursting into tears, and throwing herself at the feet of the stadtholder, who, although believing her guilty, felt pity for her dreadful agony.

"You have done very wrong, my child," he said, "and

your lover shall be punished for having advised you thus; for you are so young, and have such an honest mien, that I am inclined to believe the mischief to have been his doing, and not yours."

"Oh, your Highness, your Highness!" cried Rosa, "Cornelius is not guilty!"

William started.

"Not guilty of having advised you; that's what you mean, is it not?"

"What I mean, your Highness, is that Cornelius is as little guilty of the second crime imputed to him as he was of the first."

"Of the first? And do you know what was his first crime? Do you know of what he was accused and convicted? — of having, as an accomplice of Cornelius de Witt, concealed the correspondence of the Grand Pensionary and the Marquis de Louvois."

"Yes, but, Mynheer, he was ignorant that this correspondence had been left in his care, — completely ignorant. Otherwise, my God, he would have told me. Could that pure, noble heart conceal aught from me? No, no, your Highness, I repeat, even though I incur your displeasure, Cornelius is no more guilty of the first crime than of the second; and of the second no more than of the first. Oh, would to Heaven that you knew my Cornelius, your Highness!"

"He is a De Witt!" cried Boxtel. "His Highness knows only too much of him, having once granted him his life."

"Silence!" said the prince; "all these affairs of State, as I have already said, are completely outside of the jurisdiction of the Horticultural Society of Harlem."

Then he added, with a slight frown, —

"As to the tulip, make yourself easy, Master Boxtel; you shall have justice done you."

Boxtel bowed, with a heart full of joy, and received the congratulations of the president.

"You, my child," William of Orange continued, "you were very near committing a crime. I shall not punish you; but the real culprit shall pay the penalty for both. A man of his name may be a conspirator, and even a traitor; but he ought not to be a thief."

"A thief!" cried Rosa. "Cornelius a thief! Pray, your Highness, take care, for he would die were he to hear your words; such words would kill him more surely than the axe of the executioner would have done upon the Buytenhof. If theft there has been, I swear to you, Mynheer, no one but this man has committed it."

"Prove it," sneered Boxtel.

"Oh, I will; with God's help, I will prove it!" retorted the maiden, earnestly.

Then, turning toward Boxtel, she asked, —

"The tulip is yours?"

"It is."

"How many bulbs were there?"

Boxtel hesitated for a moment, but he came to the conclusion that she would not ask this question if there had been no more than the two of which he already knew. He therefore answered, —

"Three."

"What has become of these bulbs?" demanded Rosa.

"What has become of them? Well, one has failed; the second has produced the black tulip."

"And the third?"

"The third!"

"Yes, the third, where is it?"

"The third is at my house," said Boxtel, quite confused.

"At your house? Where, — at Loewestein, or at Dort?"

"At Dort," said Boxtel.

"You lie!" cried Rosa. "Your Highness," she continued, turning to the prince, "I will tell you the true story of those three bulbs. The first was crushed by my father in the prisoner's cell, and this man is quite aware of it; for he himself wanted to get hold of it, and being balked in his hope, he very nearly fell out with my father, who had been the cause of his disappointment. The second bulb, under my care, has produced the black tulip; and the third and last" — saying this she drew it from her bosom — "here it is, in the very same paper in which it was wrapped up together with the two others, when, as he was about to ascend the scaffold, Cornelius van Baerle gave me all three. Take it, your Highness, take it."

And Rosa, unfolding the paper, offered the bulb to the prince, who took it from her hands and examined it.

"But, your Highness, may not this young woman have stolen the bulb as she did the tulip?" stammered Boxtel, alarmed at the attention with which the prince examined the bulb, and even more at the sudden interest displayed by Rosa in some lines written on the paper which remained in her hands.

Her eyes suddenly lighted up; she read the mysterious paper again in breathless haste, and then, with an exclamation, held it out to the prince.

"Oh, read, your Highness, in God's name, read!" she cried.

William handed the third bulb to Van Systens, took the paper, and read.

No sooner had he looked at it than he staggered back; his hand trembled, as if it would let the paper fall to the ground, and the expression of pain and compassion in his eyes was frightful to see.

The leaf Rosa had handed him was that page of his Bible which Cornelius de Witt had sent to Dort by Craeke, the servant of his brother John, to request Van Baerle to burn the correspondence of the Grand Pensionary with the Marquis de Louvois.

This request, as the reader may remember, was couched in the following terms: —

My dear Godson, — Burn the parcel which I have intrusted to you. Burn it without looking at it, and without opening it, so that its contents may forever remain unknown to yourself. Secrets of this description are death to those with whom they are deposited. Burn it, and you will have saved the lives of John and Cornelius.

Farewell, and love me.

Cornelius de Witt.

August 20, 1672.

This slip of paper was proof at once of Van Baerle's innocence and of his claim of ownership of the tulip-bulbs.

Rosa and the stadtholder exchanged one glance.

That of Rosa was meant to express, "Now you can see who is right."

That of the stadtholder signified, "Say nothing, and wait."

The prince wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and slowly folded the paper, as he allowed his gaze to

follow his thoughts into that bottomless, hopeless abyss, which is called remorse and shame for the past.

Soon, however, raising his head with an effort, he said, in his usual voice, —

"Go, Mynheer Boxtel; justice shall be done, I promise you."

Then, turning to the president, he added, —

"Do you, my dear Mynheer van Systens, keep this young woman and the tulip here with you. Good-by."

All bowed, and the prince left amid the deafening cheers of the crowd outside.

Boxtel returned to his inn, rather anxious. He was much disturbed by that paper which William had received from the hand of Rosa, and had read, folded, and so carefully put away in his pocket.

Rosa went up to the tulip, tenderly kissed its leaves, and in the fulness of her entire trust in God, she murmured, —

"My God, Thou knowest for what end my good Cornelius taught me to read!"

Yes, God did know, for it is he who chastises and rewards mankind according to their deserts.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE SONG OF THE FLOWERS.

Whilst the events we have described in our last chapters were taking place, the unfortunate Van Baerle, forgotten in his cell in the fortress of Lœwestein, suffered at the hands of Gryphus all that a prisoner can suffer when his jailer has formed the determination of playing the part of hangman.

Gryphus, not having received any tidings of Rosa or of Jacob, persuaded himself that all that had happened was the devil's work, and that the devil himself was responsible for Dr. Cornelius van Baerle's presence on earth.

The result was that one fine morning, the third day after the disappearance of Jacob and Rosa, he went up to Cornelius's cell in even a greater rage than usual.

The latter, leaning his elbows on the window-sill, and supporting his head with his hands, while his eyes wandered distractedly along the hazy horizon, where the windmills of Dort were lazily turning their sails, was seeking in the fresh, invigorating air for strength to restrain his tears and maintain his philosophical tranquillity.

The pigeons were still there; but hope had vanished, — the future seemed to hold nothing for him.

Alas! Rosa was being watched, and was no longer able to come. Could she not write? And if so, could she manage to send her letters to him?

No, no! He had seen during the two preceding days too much fury and malignity in the eyes of old Gryphus to expect that his vigilance would relax even for one moment. And then had she not tortures to endure a thousand times worse than solitude and separation? Would not the blaspheming, drunken brute revenge himself after the fashion of the fathers in the old Greek plays? And when the gin had snarled up his wits, would it not endow his arm — which Cornelius had set only too well — with the strength of two ordinary arms and a club?

The idea that Rosa might perhaps be ill-treated nearly drove Cornelius mad.

He then felt his own helplessness, his powerlessness, and nothingness. He asked himself whether God was just in inflicting so much tribulation on two innocent creatures. There is no doubt that during that sad time his belief wavered. Misfortune does not conduce to faith in sinful man.

Van Baerle thought of writing to Rosa; but where was she?

He also had an idea of writing to the Hague to forestall Gryphus, who he had no doubt would by denouncing him do his best to bring fresh trouble upon him.

But how should he write? Gryphus had taken the paper and pencil from him; and even if he had both, he could hardly expect Gryphus to take charge of his letter.

Then Cornelius considered in every light all the shallow artifices resorted to by unfortunate prisoners.

He had thought of an attempt to escape, — a thing which never entered his head while he could see Rosa

every day; but the more he thought of it the more clearly he saw the impracticability of such an attempt. His was one of those fastidious natures which abhor everything that is common, and often lose fine opportunities by shrinking from following in the beaten track, — the highway of people of moderate pretensions, and which may lead to any height.

"How would it be possible," said Cornelius to himself, "for me to escape from Lœwestein, as Grotius did? Has not every precaution been taken since? Are not the windows barred? Are not the doors twice or three times as strong as they were then, and the sentinels ten times more watchful? And besides the barred windows and the double doors and the vigilant sentinels, have I not a tireless watcher, — a veritable Argus, so much the more to be dreaded because his eyes are made keen by hatred, — old Gryphus himself? Finally, is there not one circumstance which takes away all my spirit, — I mean Rosa's absence? But suppose I should waste ten years of my life in making a file to file off my bars or in braiding cords to let myself down from the window, or in sticking wings on my shoulders to fly, like Daedalus? But luck is against me now. The file would get dull, the rope would break, or my wings would melt in the sun; I should surely kill myself; I should be picked up maimed and crippled; I should be labelled, and put on exhibition in the museum at the Hague between the blood-stained doublet of William the Taciturn and the female walrus captured at Stavesen, and the only result of my enterprise will have been to procure me a place among the curiosities of Holland.

"But no; and it is much better so. Some fine day

Gryphus will commit some atrocity. I am losing my patience since I lost all pleasure by losing the company of Rosa, and especially since I lost my tulip. Undoubtedly, some day or other Gryphus will attack me in a manner offensive to my self-respect or to my love, or even threaten my personal safety. Since I have been left entirely to myself I am conscious of a strange feeling of physical power and of mental vigor, which make me cross beyond measure, they are so loud in their demand to be brought into action. I long to fight some one; my appetite for a row is insatiable; and I have an incomprehensible thirst for giving and receiving blows. I shall surely jump at the throat of my villanous old friend and strangle him."

Cornelius at his last words stopped for a moment, with clenched teeth and staring eye.

He was eagerly revolving in his mind a thought which at last made him smile.

"Well," continued he, resuming his soliloquy, "with Gryphus once strangled, why not take his keys from him, why not go down the stairs as if I had done the most virtuous action, why not seek Rosa in her room, why not tell her all, and jump with her from her window into the Waal? I can certainly swim well enough for two. Rosa — but, oh, heavens, Gryphus is her father! Whatever may be her affection for me, she will never approve of my having strangled her father, brutal and malicious as he has been. I shall have to enter into an argument with her; and in the midst of my speech some wretched turnkey who has found Gryphus with the death-rattle in his throat, or perhaps actually dead, will come along and *put* his hand on my shoulder. Then I shall see the

Buytenhof again, and the gleam of that infernal sword, — which will not stop half-way a second time, but will make acquaintance with the nape of my neck. It will not do, Cornelius, my fine fellow; it is a bad plan. But, then, what is to become of me, and how shall I find Rosa again?"

Such were the cogitations of Cornelius three days after the sad scene of separation from Rosa, at the moment when we find him standing at the window.

And at that very moment Gryphus entered.

He held in his hand a huge club; his eyes glistened with evil thoughts, an evil smile played upon his lips, his gait had an evil uncertainty, and evil intentions exhaled from his whole morose person.

Cornelius, inured as we have seen to the necessity of patience, — a necessity which amounted to conviction, — heard him enter, and guessed that it was he, but did not turn round; he knew that this time no Rosa accompanied him.

There is nothing more galling to angry people than the coolness of those on whom they wish to vent their spleen.

The expense being once incurred, one does not like to lose it; one's passion is roused, and one's blood boiling. It seems a pure loss of energy if the boiling should not eventuate in a little stew.

Every honest rascal who has sharpened his ill-humor to a keen edge longs to inflict a wound upon somebody with it.

Gryphus therefore, on seeing that Cornelius did not stir, tried to attract his attention by a loud —

"Umph, umph!"

Cornelius was humming between his teeth the "Song of the Flowers," — a sad but beautiful song, —

"We are the children of the hidden fire,
Of the fire which courses through the veins of the earth;
We are the children of the dawn and the dew;
We are the children of the air;
We are the children of the fountain;
But we are, above all, the children of heaven."

This song — the placid melancholy of which was made more impressive by its soft, sweet melody — exasperated Gryphus.

He struck his club on the stone pavement of the cell, and called out, —

"Halloa, my musical friend! Don't you hear me?"

Cornelius turned.

"Good morning," said he, and then began his song again, —

"Men defile us, and destroy us for very love;
We are held to the earth by but a slender thread.
This thread is our root, — that is to say, our life;
But we raise our arms to our full height toward heaven."

"Ah, you accursed sorcerer! you are making game of me, I believe," roared Gryphus.

Cornelius continued, —

"For heaven is our fatherland,
Our true fatherland, for thence comes our soul,
And thither our soul returns, —
Our soul; that is to say, our perfume."

Gryphus went close up to him, and said, —

"Don't you see, pray, that I have taken measures to

humble your damned pride and make you confess your crimes?"

"Are you mad, my dear Master Gryphus?" asked Cornelius, turning to look at him.

As he spoke, he observed the forbidding expression, the flashing eyes, and foaming mouth of the old jailer.

"The devil!" he muttered; "he is more than mad, it seems; he is a raving lunatic."

Gryphus flourished his club above his head, without moving a muscle.

"Here, friend Gryphus," said Van Baerle, with folded arms, "you seem to threaten me."

"Yes, indeed, I do threaten you!" cried the jailer.

"What do you propose to do?"

"First of all, see what I have in my hand."

"I think that 's a club," said Cornelius, calmly, — "in fact, a big club; but I don't imagine that that is what you threaten me with."

"Oh, you don't! why not?"

"Because any jailer who strikes a prisoner is liable to two penalties; the first laid down in Article 9 of the regulations of Lœwestein, —

"'Any jailer, inspector, or turnkey who lays hand upon a prisoner of State will be dismissed.'"

"Yes, who lays hands," said Gryphus, mad with rage; "but how about a club? Aha! the rules are dumb on the subject of clubs."

"And the second," continued Cornelius, "which is not included in the regulations, but which is to be found in the holy Gospel, is this, 'Whosoever smites with the sword shall perish by the sword,' — in other words,

'Whosoever smites with the club shall receive a good thrashing therewith.'"

Gryphus, more and more enraged by the calm and sententious tone of Cornelius, brandished his cudgel; but just as he raised it, Cornelius rushed at him, snatched it from his hands, and put it under his own arm.

Gryphus fairly bellowed with rage.

"There, there, my good man," said Cornelius, "don't risk the loss of your place."

"Ah, you sorcerer, I 'll make you pay dear for this," roared Gryphus.

"All right."

"Don't you see that my hands are empty?"

"Yes, I do, and not without a certain amount of satisfaction."

"You know that it is not generally the case when I come upstairs in the morning."

"Ah, that's true, for you generally bring me the worst soup and the most miserable rations one can imagine. But that's not a punishment to me; I eat only bread, and the worse the bread is to your taste, Gryphus, the better it is to mine."

"The better it is to yours?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"Oh, it 's a very simple thing."

"Tell me, then," said Gryphus.

"Willingly. I know that in giving me bad bread you think you annoy me."

"Certainly, I don't give it you to please you, you brigand."

"Well, then, I, who am a sorcerer, as you know,

change your bad bread into excellent bread, which I relish more than the best cake; and then I have the double pleasure of eating something that gratifies my palate, and of doing something that puts you in a rage."

Gryphus answered with a growl.

"Oh, you confess, then, that you are a sorcerer?"

"Faith, yes; if I am so. I don't say it before all the world, because they might send me to the stake, like Gaufredy, or Urbain Grandier; but as we are alone, I see no objection to telling you."

"Very good, very good," retorted Gryphus; "but even if a sorcerer can change black bread into white, will he be the less likely to die of hunger if he has no bread at all?"

"What's that?" said Cornelius.

"So, I think I will not bring you any bread at all, and we will see how you are after eight days."

Cornelius grew pale.

"And," continued Gryphus, "we'll begin this very day. As you are such a clever sorcerer, why, you had better change the furniture of your room into bread; as to myself, I shall pocket the eighteen sous a day which are paid to me for your board."

"But that's murder," cried Cornelius, carried away by the first impulse of very natural terror with which the bare thought of this horrible mode of death inspired him.

"Well," Gryphus went on in his jeering way, "as you are a sorcerer, you will live notwithstanding."

Cornelius resumed his jovial demeanor, and with a shrug of the shoulders, he said, —

"Have you not seen me make the pigeons come hither from Dort?"

"Well," said Gryphus.

"Well, a pigeon makes a very dainty roast, and a man who eats one every day is not likely to starve, I fancy."

"What will you do for a fire?" said Gryphus.

"Fire! why, you know that I'm in league with the devil. Do you think the devil will leave me without fire when fire is his natural element?"

"A man, however healthy his appetite may be, could not eat a pigeon every day. Men have made bets before now that they would do so, and have been obliged to abandon them."

"Well, but when I am tired of pigeons, I have only to summon the fish from the Waal and the Meuse."

Gryphus opened his eyes to their widest extent in bewilderment.

"I am rather fond of fish," continued Cornelius; "you never let me have any. Well, I will take advantage of your attempt to starve me, and regale myself with fish."

Gryphus nearly fainted with anger and terror; but he soon rallied, and said, putting his hand in his pocket, —

"Well, if you force me to it," — and with these words, he drew forth a clasp-knife and opened it.

"Halloa, a knife!" said Cornelius, preparing to defend himself with his cudgel.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH VAN BAERLE, BEFORE LEAVING LŒWESTEIN, SETTLES ACCOUNTS WITH GRYPHUS.

THE two stood for a moment, Gryphus on the offensive, and Van Baerle on the defensive.

Then, as the situation might be prolonged to an indefinite length, Cornelius, anxious to learn the cause of this extraordinary reinforcement of wrath on the part of his adversary, asked him, —

"In Heaven's name, what do you want?"

"I 'll tell you what I want," answered Gryphus, "I want you to give me back my daughter Rosa."

"Your daughter?" cried Van Baerle.

"Yes, Rosa, whom you have taken from me by your devilish magic. Now, will you tell me where she is?"

And the attitude of Gryphus became more and more threatening.

"Rosa not at Lœwestein?" cried Cornelius.

"You know very well she is not. Once more, will you give Rosa back to me?"

"Oh, yes," said Cornelius, "this is a trap you are laying for me."

"Now, for the last time, will you tell me where my daughter is?"

"Guess, you villain, if you don't know."

"Only wait, only wait!" growled Gryphus, white with rage, and with lips quivering with the excitement which

began to turn his brain. "Ah, you will not tell me anything? Well, I 'll unlock your teeth!"

He advanced a step towards Cornelius, and said, showing him the weapon which glistened in his hand, —

"Do you see this knife? Well, I have killed more than fifty black cocks with it; and I vow I 'll kill their master the devil, as well as them. Just wait, just you wait!"

"Why, you blockhead," said Cornelius, "do you really mean to kill me?"

"I will open your heart, to see the place within it where you hide my daughter."

With these words, Gryphus in his frenzy rushed upon Cornelius, who had barely time to retreat behind his table to avoid the first thrust. Gryphus continued, with horrid threats, to brandish his huge knife. Cornelius saw that although he was beyond the reach of his hand, he was not out of range of the weapon, which if thrown at him might bury itself in his chest. So he lost no time, but with the cudgel, which he had kept tight hold upon, dealt a vigorous blow on the wrist which held the knife.

The knife fell to the ground, and Cornelius put his foot on it.

Then, as Gryphus seemed bent upon engaging in a struggle, which the pain in his wrist and shame at having allowed himself to be twice disarmed would have made desperate, Cornelius took a decisive step. He belabored his jailer, with most heroic self-possession selecting the precise spot for every blow of the terrible cudgel.

Gryphus was not slow in begging for mercy; but

before doing so he had roared long and loud, and his bellowing had been heard and had roused all the functionaries of the prison. Two turnkeys, an inspector, and three or four guards made their appearance all at once, and found Cornelius still working the cudgel with his hand, with the knife under his foot.

At the sight of these witnesses of the crime he was engaged in, and whose "mitigating circumstances," as we say nowadays, were unknown to them, Cornelius felt that he was irretrievably lost.

In fact, appearances were sadly against him.

In a twinkling Cornelius was disarmed; and Gryphus, surrounded and lifted from the floor, bellowing with rage and pain, was able to take account of the bruises, which were beginning to swell on his back and shoulders like the foot-hills of a mountain range.

A *procès-verbal* of the violence practised by the prisoner against his keeper was immediately drawn up; and as it was inspired by Gryphus, it was not open to the criticism of mildness, the prisoner being charged with nothing less than an attempt to murder, long premeditated, and put in practice upon the jailer with malice aforethought and in open rebellion.

While the charge was being drawn up against Cornelius, Gryphus, whose presence was no longer necessary after his deposition had been taken, was taken down by his turnkeys to his lodge, groaning, and covered with bruises.

During this time, the guards who had seized Cornelius busied themselves charitably in informing their prisoner of the usages and customs of Lœwestein, — which, however, he knew as well as they did, the regulations having been

read to him at the moment of his entering the prison, and certain articles in them remaining fixed in his memory.

They also told him how these regulations had been applied in the case of a prisoner named Mathias, who in 1688 — that is to say, five years before — had committed a much less violent act of rebellion than that of which Cornelius was guilty. He had found his soup too hot, and had thrown it at the head of the chief turnkey, who in consequence of this ablution had been put to the inconvenience of having his skin come off as he wiped his face.

Mathias within twelve hours was taken from his cell; then led to the jailer's lodge, where he was registered as leaving Lœwestein; then taken to the Esplanade, from which there is a very fine view extending over eleven leagues.

There they fettered his hands, bandaged his eyes, and recited three prayers.

Hereupon he was invited to kneel; and the guards of Lœwestein, twelve in number, at a sign from a sergeant, each very cleverly lodged a musket-ball in his body.

In consequence whereof Mathias immediately then and there did die.

Cornelius listened with the greatest attention to this delightful recital, and then said, —

"Ah, ah! within twelve hours, you say?"

"Yes; the twelfth hour had not even struck, if I remember right," said the guard who had told him the story.

"Thank you," said Cornelius.

The guard still had the smile on his face which served

to accentuate his tale, when a loud step was heard in the hall and spurs jingled upon the worn-out stairs.

The guards fell back to allow an officer to pass, who entered the cell of Cornelius while the clerk of Lœwestein was still making out his report.

"Is this No. 11?" he asked.

"Yes, Captain," answered a subaltern.

"Then this is the cell of the prisoner Cornelius van Baerle?"

"Exactly, Captain."

"Where is the prisoner?"

"Here I am, Mynheer," answered Cornelius, growing rather pale, notwithstanding all his courage.

"You are Dr. Cornelius van Baerle?" asked he, this time addressing the prisoner himself.

"Yes, Mynheer."

"Then follow me."

"Oh, oh!" said Cornelius, whose heart felt oppressed as if by the first pang of the agony of death. "What quick work they make here in the fortress of Lœwestein! And the rascal talked to me of twelve hours!"

"Ah, what did I tell you?" whispered the historically-minded guard into th ear of the patient sufferer.

"A lie."

"How so?"

"You promised me twelve hours."

"Ah, yes; but they have sent you an aid-de-camp of his Highness, even one of his most intimate companions, Mynheer van Deken. Zounds! they did not pay such a compliment to poor Mathias."

"Come, come!" said Cornelius, drawing a long breath "Come, I 'll show these people that an honest burgher

godson of Cornelius de Witt, can without flinching receive as many musket-balls as that Mathias."

And he passed proudly before the clerk, who, being interrupted in his work, ventured to say to the officer, —

"But, Captain van Deken, the *procès-verbal* is not yet finished."

"It is hardly worth while to finish it," rejoined the officer.

"Very well," replied the clerk, philosophically, putting away his paper and pen in a greasy and well-worn writing-case.

"It was written," thought poor Cornelius, "that I should not in this world give my name either to a child, a flower, or a book, — the three things of which God requires one at least, we are told, of every well-organized individual whom He deigns to allow to rejoice in the possession of a soul and in the full exercise of mental and bodily faculties."

He followed the officer with a resolute heart and head erect.

Cornelius counted the steps which led to the Esplanade, regretting that he had not asked the guard how many there were, for the man in his officious complaisance would not have failed to tell him.

What the long-suffering fellow principally dreaded during this short journey — which he looked upon as the immediate precursor of the end of his life's journey — was that he should see Gryphus and not Rosa. What savage satisfaction would glisten in the eyes of the father, and what sorrow dim those of the daughter!

How Gryphus would glory in his punishment! Punishment? Rather, savage vengeance for an eminently

righteous deed, which Cornelius had the satisfaction of having performed as a bounden duty.

But Rosa, poor girl! must he die without a glimpse of her, without an opportunity to give her one last kiss, or even to say one last word of farewell?

And worst of all, must he die without any intelligence of the black tulip, and regain his consciousness in heaven with no idea in what direction he should look to find it?

In truth, to restrain his tears at such a crisis the poor wretch's heart must have been encased in more of the *aes triplex* — "the triple brass" — than Horace bestows upon the sailor who first visited the terrifying Acroceraunian shoals.

In vain did Cornelius look to the right and to the left; he saw no sign either of Rosa or Gryphus.

On the whole, he was glad that it was so.

When he reached the Esplanade, he looked courageously and unflinchingly about him for the guards who were to be his executioners, and saw a dozen or more soldiers standing talking together.

But they were standing and talking, not drawn up in line, and without arms; in fact they were whispering and joking rather than conversing, — a line of conduct which seemed to Cornelius little consistent with the serious mien commonly assumed on such occasions.

Suddenly Gryphus appeared at the doorway of his lodge, hobbling and tottering along, supported by a crutch. He had concentrated all the flame that his cat-like gray eyes could command in one last look of bitter hatred. He then began to pour forth such a torrent of foul abuse upon Cornelius that the latter, addressing the officer, said, —

"Mynheer, I do not think it very becoming to allow me to be thus insulted by this man, especially at a moment like this."

"But think," said the officer, laughing; "it is quite natural that this worthy fellow should bear you a grudge, for you seem to have given him a good drubbing."

"But only in self-defence, Mynheer."

"Pshaw!" said the captain, shrugging his shoulders like a true philosopher, "let him talk; what does it matter to you now?"

The cold sweat stood on the brow of Cornelius at this answer, which he looked upon as rather brutal sarcasm, especially from an officer whom he understood to be attached to the person of the prince.

The unfortunate wretch then felt that he had no more hope and no more friends, and resigned himself to his fate.

"God's will be done," he muttered, bowing his head. "They did much worse to Christ, and innocent as I am, I cannot compare myself to him. Christ would have let his jailer beat him to his heart's content, and would not have struck back."

Then turning toward the officer, who seemed to have no objection to waiting until he had finished his meditations, he asked, —

"Well, Mynheer, where am I to go?"

The officer pointed to a carriage drawn by four horses, — which reminded him very strongly of that which, under similar circumstances, had before attracted his attention at the Buytenhof.

"Enter this carriage," said the officer.

"Ah," muttered Cornelius to himself, "it seems

that I am not considered worthy of the honors of the Esplanade."

He uttered these words loud enough for the historical guard, who seemed to have attached himself to his person, to overhear him.

He doubtless thought it his duty to give Cornelius some new information; for approaching the door of the carriage while the officer, with one foot on the step, was giving his orders, he whispered to Van Baerle, —

"Condemned prisoners have sometimes been taken to their own town, and, to make their example more impressive and terrible, have undergone the penalty of the law before the door of their own house. It 's all according to circumstances."

Cornelius thanked him with a gesture.

"Well, upon my word," he thought, "here is a fellow who never loses an opportunity to say a word of comfort! Faith, my friend, I 'm very much obliged to you. Farewell."

The carriage drove away.

"Ah, you villain, you brigand!" roared Gryphus, clenching his fists at the victim, who was escaping from his clutches. "To think of his clearing out without having given me back my daughter!"

"If they take me to Dort," thought Cornelius, "I shall see as I pass my house whether my poor beds have been all torn to pieces."

## CHAPTER XXX.

WHEREIN THE READER BEGINS TO HAVE AN INKLING OF THE KIND OF PUNISHMENT THAT WAS AWAITING CORNELIUS VAN BAERLE.

THE carriage rolled on during the whole day; it left Dort on the left hand, passed through Rotterdam, and reached Delft. By five o'clock in the evening they had made at least twenty leagues.

Cornelius addressed some questions to the officer, who was at the same time his guard and his companion; but cautious as were his inquiries, he had the disappointment of receiving no answer.

Cornelius regretted that he had no longer by his side the obliging guard, who would talk without being begged to do so.

He would undoubtedly have had as pleasant details and as exact explanations to offer him concerning the remarkable character of his third adventure as he had done concerning the probabilities of his fate at its two earlier stages.

The travellers passed the night in the carriage. On the following morning at dawn Cornelius found himself beyond Leyden, having the North Sea on his left, and Harlem Lake on his right.

Three hours later he entered Harlem.

Cornelius was not aware of what had taken place at Harlem, and we shall leave him in ignorance of it until the course of events enlightens him.

But we cannot treat the reader in the same way; for he has a right to know all about it, even before our hero.

We have seen that Rosa and the tulip, like two orphan sisters, had been left by Prince William of Orange at the house of the President van Systens.

Rosa did not hear again from the stadtholder until the evening of the day on which she had seen him face to face.

Toward evening an officer called at Van Systens's house. He came from his Highness with a request for Rosa to appear at the Town Hall.

There, in the large council room into which she was ushered, she found the prince writing.

He was alone, with a large Frisian greyhound at his feet, who gazed earnestly at him, as if the faithful animal would have tried to accomplish what no man could do, — read his master's mind.

William continued his writing for a moment; then raising his eyes, and seeing Rosa standing near the door, he said, without laying down his pen, —

"Come here, my child."

Rosa advanced a few steps toward the table.

"I have come, your Highness," said she, stopping at a short distance from him.

"Very well," returned the prince; "be seated."

Rosa obeyed, for the prince had his eye upon her; but he had scarcely turned them again to his paper when she bashfully retired.

The prince finished his letter.

During this time the greyhound had gone up to Rosa, made a careful survey of her, and begun to make friendly overtures.

"Ah," said William to his dog, "it's easy to see that she is a countrywoman of yours, and that you recognize her."

Then turning toward Rosa, and fixing on her his scrutinizing and at the same time impenetrable glance, he said, —

"Now my child."

The prince was scarcely twenty-three, and Rosa eighteen or twenty. He might, perhaps, better have said "my sister."

"My child," he said, with that strangely commanding tone which chilled all those who approached him, "we are alone, and may speak freely."

Rosa began to tremble in every limb; and yet there was nothing but kindness in the expression of the prince's face.

"Your Highness," she stammered.

"You have a father at Lœwestein?"

"Yes, your Highness."

"You do not love him?"

"I do not, — at least not as a daughter ought to do, your Highness."

"It is not right not to love one's father, but it is right not to tell a falsehood to your prince."

Rosa lowered her eyes.

"Why do you not love your father?"

"He is a wicked man."

"In what way does he show his wickedness?"

"He ill-treats the prisoners."

"All of them?"

"All."

"But do you not complain of his ill-treating some one in particular?"

"My father is particularly severe upon Mynheer van Baerle, who —"

"Who is your lover."

Rosa started back a step.

"Whom I love, your Highness," she answered proudly.

"Since when?" asked the prince.

"Since the day when I first saw him."

"And when was that?"

"The day after that on which the Grand Pensionary John and his brother Cornelius met with such an awful death."

The prince compressed his lips and knit his brow, and his eyelids drooped so as to hide his eyes for an instant. After a momentary silence, he resumed the conversation.

"But what is the object of loving a man who is doomed to live and die in prison?"

"My object, your Highness, if he must live and die in prison, is to do my best to make his life pleasant, and prepare him to meet death with resignation."

"And would you accept the lot of being the wife of a prisoner?"

"As the wife of Mynheer van Baerle, I should, under any circumstances, be the proudest and happiest woman in the world; but —"

"But what?"

"I dare not say, your Highness."

"There is something like hope in your tone — what do you hope!"

She raised her beautiful eyes to William's face, — her clear, honest eyes, endowed with such keen penetration that they went straight to the bottom of his heart in search of the clemency which lay slumbering there, in a slumber which was almost death.

"Ah, I understand."

Rosa, with a smile, clasped her hands.

"You hope in me?" said the prince.

"Yes, your Highness."

"Hum!"

The prince sealed the letter which he had just written, and summoned one of his officers.

"Mynheer van Deken," said he, "carry this despatch to Lœwestein; you will read the orders which I give to the governor, and execute them as far as they concern you."

The officer bowed, and a few minutes afterwards the gallop of a horse was heard resounding in the vaulted archway.

"My child," continued the prince, "the feast of the tulip will be on Sunday, and Sunday will be the day after to-morrow. Make yourself fine with these five hundred florins, for I intend that day to be a great holiday for you."

"How does your Highness wish me to be dressed?" faltered Rosa.

"Wear the costume of a Frisian bride," said William, "it will become you very well indeed."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### HARLEM.

HARLEM, where we conducted the gentle reader with Rosa three days ago, and whither we now ask him to accompany us once more in the prisoner's wake, is a charming town, which prides itself, and justly, upon being one of the most umbrageous in all Holland.

While other towns base their self-esteem upon the magnificence of their arsenals or dock-yards, or the splendor of their shops and bazaars, Harlem rested all her claim to glory upon her manifest supremacy over all the other towns in the provinces in the matter of branching elms, stately poplars, and above all in the number and beauty of her shaded walks, over which the oak, the linden, and the chestnut mingled their foliage in graceful arches.

Harlem — as her neighbor Leyden, and Amsterdam, her queen, became, the former a town of scientific eminence, and the other a metropolis of commerce, — Harlem chose to become an agricultural, or more strictly speaking, a horticultural town.

In truth, being enclosed as she was, very airy, and exposed to the heat of the sun, she offered to gardeners such guarantees of success as no other place could do, with their sea-breezes, or their scorching heat.

Thus all the tranquil spirits who loved the soil and its products had gradually assembled at Harlem, just

as all the restless, uneasy souls, who were inspired with the taste for travel and love of business, had settled at Rotterdam or Amsterdam, and all the politicians and worldly self-seekers flocked to the Hague.

We have remarked that Leyden had been overrun by the scholars.

Thus Harlem was given over to mild and peaceful pursuits, — to music and painting, orchards and boulevards, woods and parks.

Harlem went mad over flowers, and tulips came in for their share of adoration.

Harlem offered prizes in honor of tulips; and this leads us as naturally as possible to speak of that festival which the town proposed to hold on the 15th of May, 1673, in honor of the great black tulip, spotless and perfect, which was to win one hundred thousand florins for its discoverer.

Harlem, having exhibited its special pet, having made manifest its taste for flowers in general and tulips in particular, at a time when war and sedition filled men's minds; Harlem, having enjoyed the extraordinary pleasure of seeing the very beau ideal of tulips in bloom, — Harlem, the lovely little town, full of trees and of sunshine, of shade and light, had determined to make of the ceremony of conferring the prize a *fête* which should live forever in the memory of mankind.

And there was so much the more reason in her determination, because Holland is the home of *fêtes;* never did sluggish natures manifest more eager energy of the singing and dancing sort than those of the good republicans of the Seven Provinces when amusement was the order of the day.

Look at the pictures of the two Teniers.

It is certain that sluggish folk are of all men the most earnest in tiring themselves, not when they are at work, but at play.

Thus Harlem was given over to rejoicing thrice, for a threefold celebration was to take place: the black tulip had been produced; Prince William of Orange had promised to be present at the ceremony, like the true Dutchman he was; and thirdly, it was a point of honor with the States to show to the French at the conclusion of so disastrous a war as that of 1672 that the flooring of the Batavian Republic was solid enough for its people to dance upon, with the accompaniment of the cannon of their fleets.

The Horticultural Society of Harlem had shown itself worthy of its fame by giving a hundred thousand florins for a tulip-bulb. The town, not to be outdone, voted a like sum, which was placed in the hands of its leading citizens to celebrate worthily the awarding of the prize.

Thus there was on the Sunday fixed for this ceremony such earnestness apparent among the people, and such enthusiasm among the townsfolk, that even a quizzical Frenchman, who laughs at everything at all times, could not have helped admiring the character of those honest Hollanders, who were equally ready to spend their money for the construction of a man-of-war — that is to say, to maintain the national honor — as to offer a reward for the discovery of a new flower, destined to bloom for one day, and to serve during that day to divert the ladies, the scholars, and the curiosity-seekers.

At the head of the municipal authorities and of the Horticultural Committee shone Mynheer van Systens, dressed in his richest clothes.

The worthy man had done his best to resemble his favorite flower in the sombre and chaste elegance of his garments; and we are bound to record, to his honor, that he had perfectly succeeded in his object.

Jet black velvet and violet silk, with linen of dazzling whiteness, composed the festival costume of the president, who marched at the head of his committee carrying an enormous nosegay, like that which, a hundred and twenty-one years later, Monsieur de Robespierre displayed at the festival of "The Supreme Being."

But the worthy president, instead of the heart swollen with hatred and ambitious vindictiveness of the French Tribune, carried in his bosom a heart as innocent as the flowers which he held in his hand.

Behind the committee, who were bedecked with gay colors like a flowering meadow, and exhaled the sweet perfumes of the springtime, marched the learned societies of the town, the magistrates, the military, the nobles, and the peasants.

The people, even among the respected republicans of the Seven Provinces, had no place assigned to them in the procession. They formed a living hedge along the line of march.

That is the best position of all to see and to learn.

It is the place for the multitude, who philosophically wait until the triumphal pageants have passed that they may the better judge what they should say about them, and sometimes what they ought to do as well.

This time, however, there was no question either of the triumph of Pompey or of Cæsar; nor were they celebrating the defeat of Mithridates, or the conquest of Gaul. The procession was as placid as the passing of

a flock of lambs on the earth, and as inoffensive as the flight of birds through the air.

Harlem had no triumphant conquerors except its gardeners. In its worship of flowers, Harlem idolized the florist.

In the centre of this peaceful, sweet-smelling cortège the black tulip was seen, borne on a litter, which was covered with white velvet fringed with gold.

Four men carried the handles of the litter, and were from time to time relieved by other fresh relays, — just as the bearers of Mother Cybele used to take turn and turn about at Rome in the days of old, when she was brought from Etruria to the Eternal City, amid the blare of trumpets and the adoration of a whole nation.

This public display of the tulip was an act of homage rendered by a whole nation, uncultured and unrefined, to the refinement and culture of its illustrious and devout leaders, whose blood it had shed upon the foul pavement of the Buytenhof, reserving the right at a future day to inscribe the names of its victims upon the fairest stone of the Dutch Pantheon.

It was arranged that the prince stadtholder should himself award the prize of a hundred thousand florins, — a matter in which everybody was interested, — and that in connection with that duty he would perhaps make a speech, the latter consideration being of especial interest to his particular friends and his particular enemies.

For in the most insignificant speeches of men of political prominence their friends and their opponents always try to detect, and hence think they can interpret, something of their real thoughts.

As if your true politician's hat were not always a bushel under which he hides his light!

At last the great and long-expected day — May 15, 1673 — had arrived; and all Harlem, reinforced by her neighbors, was congregated along the beautiful tree-lined streets, determined on this occasion not to waste its applause upon military heroes, or those who had won notable victories in scientific fields, but to reserve their approbation for those who had conquered Nature, and had forced the inexhaustible mother to be delivered of what had theretofore been regarded as impossible of production, — a wholly black tulip.

Nothing, however, is less to be relied upon than the determination of a crowd of people not to applaud this or that thing. When a whole town is in an applauding mood it is no more possible to tell where it will stop than when they are in the humor for hissing.

They began by cheering Van Systens and his bouquet; they cheered the corporations, and even vented some of their superfluous energy upon themselves; and lastly, and with good reason, they applauded the excellent music which was furnished in profusion at every halt.

All eyes were looking eagerly for the heroine of the festival, — the black tulip, that is to say, — and for its hero in the person of the individual who had grown it.

If this hero should make his appearance after the speech we have seen worthy Van Systens at work on so conscientiously, he would be sure to produce as much of a sensation as the stadtholder himself.

But for us the interest of the day's proceedings is centred neither in the learned discourse of our friend Van Systens, however eloquent it might be; nor in the young aristocrats, clad in their Sunday clothes, and

crunching their heavy cakes; nor in the poor young peasants, nibbling smoked eels as if they were sticks of vanilla candy: neither is our interest in the lovely Dutch girls, with ruddy cheeks and white bosoms; nor in the fat, dumpy mynheers, who had never left their homes before; nor in the sallow, thin travellers from Ceylon or Java; nor in the thirsty crowds, who quenched their thirst with pickled cucumbers, — no, so far as we are concerned, the real interest of the situation, the engrossing, dramatic interest, is to be found in none of these.

Our interest is in a beaming, sparkling face to be espied amid the members of the Horticultural Committee; in the individual with a flower in his belt, combed and brushed, and all clad in scarlet, — a color which makes his black hair and yellow skin stand out in startling prominence.

This beaming, triumphant personage, intoxicated with pride, the hero of the day, destined to the extraordinary honor of overshadowing the discourse of Van Systens and the stadtholder's presence, is no other than Isaac Boxtel, who sees before his eyes, on the right hand, the black tulip, his pretended child, upon a velvet cushion; and at his left, in the huge purse, the one hundred thousand florins, in shining, tinkling gold, — and who has almost become cross-eyed in his determination not to lose sight of either for an instant.

From time to time Boxtel quickened his step to rub elbows for a moment with Van Systens. He borrowed a little importance from everybody to make a sort of fictitious importance for himself, as he had stolen Rosa's tulip to effect his own glory, and make his fortune thereby.

In another quarter of an hour the prince will arrive,

and the last stop for rest will be made. The tulip being placed upon its throne, the prince, yielding precedence to this rival in the public adoration, will take a magnificently illuminated parchment, upon which the name of the grower is inscribed, and in a loud, clear voice will proclaim that he has discovered a marvel; that Holland, by Boxtel's instrumentality, has forced Nature to produce a black flower, and that this flower will henceforth be called "Tulipa Nigra Boxtellea."

From time to time, however, Boxtel took his eyes a moment from the tulip and the purse, and scanned the crowd fearfully; for of all things he most dreaded to see among the people was Rosa's sweet face.

We can understand that that would have been a spectre which would have spoiled the festivities for him as completely as Banquo's ghost disturbed the repose of Macbeth.

And yet let us hasten to say that this wretch, who had scaled a wall that was not his, who had entered his neighbor's house by a window, and who had violated Rosa's chamber by a false key, — this villain who had filched a man's glory and a maiden's marriage-portion, by no means considered himself a thief.

He had watched the tulip so intently, had followed it so eagerly from Cornelius's drawer in his drying-room to the scaffold on the Buytenhof, and thence to the fortress of Lœwestein; he had so zealously observed its birth and growth in Rosa's window, and had so many times heated the air around it with his breath, that he felt as if no one were so much its discoverer as he, and that whoever now took the black tulip from him must steal it.

But he did not see Rosa. Thus Boxtel's delight was

without alloy. The procession stopped in the centre of a circle formed by superb trees, which were decorated with wreaths and inscriptions; it stopped amid joyous music; and the fair damsels of Harlem came forward to escort the tulip to the raised seat which it was to occupy on the platform by the side of the gilded chair of his Highness the stadtholder.

And the haughty tulip, elevated on its pedestal, soon overlooked the assembled crowd of people, who clapped their hands and woke the echoes of Harlem with their tremendous cheers.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### A LAST REQUEST.

At this solemn moment, and while the cheers were still at their loudest, a carriage was driving along the road which skirted the wood, making but slow progress on account of the swarms of children who were crowded out from under the trees into the road by the selfish eagerness of the men and women.

This carriage, covered with dust, and creaking on its axles, as if wearied by its long journey, contained the unfortunate Van Baerle, who was just beginning to get a glimpse through the open window of the scene which we have tried — with poor success, no doubt — to present to the eyes of the reader.

The crowd and the noise and the display of artificial and natural magnificence were as dazzling to the prisoner as a ray of light coming suddenly into his dungeon.

Notwithstanding the little readiness which his companion had shown in answering his questions concerning his fate, he ventured once more to ask the meaning of all this bustle, which at first sight seemed to be utterly disconnected with his own affairs.

"What is all this, pray, Mynheer Lieutenant?" he asked of his conductor.

"As you may see, sir," replied the officer, "it is a *fête*."

"Ah, a *fête!*" said Cornelius, in the sad tone of indifference of a man to whom earthly joy has long been a stranger.

Then, after a moment's silence, during which the carriage had proceeded a few yards, he asked once more, —

"Is it the *fête* of the patron saint of Harlem? For I see quantities of flowers."

"It is, indeed, an occasion in which flowers play a principal part."

"Oh, what sweet odors! oh, what beautiful colors!" cried Cornelius.

"Stop, so that the gentleman may see," said the officer, acting upon one of those compassionate impulses which are so often seen among military men, to the soldier who was acting as postilion.

"Oh, thank you, Mynheer, for your kindness," replied Van Baerle, in a melancholy tone; "but it is a very painful pleasure to me to see others enjoying themselves thus; so spare me, I pray."

"As you please. Drive on! I ordered the driver to stop because you asked me the question, as well as because you are said to love flowers, and especially those to whom this day's celebration is devoted."

"And what flowers are those?"

"The tulips."

"The tulips!" cried Van Baerle. "Is to-day the feast of tulips?"

"Yes, Mynheer; but as this spectacle is unpleasant to you, let us drive on."

The officer was about to give the order to proceed; but Cornelius stopped him, a painful thought having struck him.

"Mynheer," he asked with a faltering voice, "is it to-day that the prize is to be awarded?"

"The prize for the black tulip? Yes."

Cornelius's cheek flushed, his whole frame trembled, and the perspiration stood on his brow.

"Alas!" he said, "all these good people will be as unfortunate as myself; for they will not see the solemnity which they have come to witness, — or at least they will see it incompletely."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean," replied Cornelius, throwing himself back in the carriage, "that the black tulip will not be discovered except by one whom I know."

"In this case," said the officer, "the person whom you know has discovered it; for the thing at which the whole of Harlem is looking at this moment is the very flower which you consider undiscoverable."

"The black tulip!" cried Van Baerle, thrusting half his body out of the carriage-window. "Where is it? where is it?"

"Down there, on the throne, — don't you see?"

"Yes; I see it now."

"Well," said the officer, "we must be off now."

"Oh, in pity's name, in mercy's name, Mynheer," said Van Baerle, "don't take me away! Let me look once more! Can it be that what I see down there is the black tulip, — quite black? Is it possible? Oh, Mynheer, have you seen it? It must have spots of color; it must be imperfect; perhaps it is only dyed black. Oh,

if I were only there I could soon tell! Let me alight, let me see it closer, I beg of you!"

"Are you mad? How can I do it?"

"I implore you!"

"But you forget that you are a prisoner."

"It is true I am a prisoner; but I am a man of honor; and upon my honor I will make no attempt to escape. Only let me see the flower!"

"But my orders, Mynheer?"

And again the officer made the driver a sign to proceed.

Cornelius stopped him once more.

"Oh, be forbearing, be generous! My whole life depends upon your pity, — my poor life, alas! which has probably but a short time longer to run. Ah, you don't know what I suffer; you don't know the struggle going on in my heart and in my brain! For, after all," Cornelius cried in despair, "if this were to prove to be my tulip; if it were the one which was stolen from Rosa — Oh, Mynheer, just consider what it is to have discovered the black tulip, to have seen it for an instant only, — to have seen that it was perfect, a consummate masterpiece of art and nature in collaboration, — and then to lose it, — to lose it for ever and ever! Oh, I must alight, Mynheer! I must see the flower! You may kill me afterwards if you like, but I will see it, I must see it!"

"Be quiet, wretched man, and come back into the carriage at once, for the escort of his Highness the stadtholder is just passing; and if the prince observed any disturbance or heard any noise, it would be all over with me as well as with you."

Van Baerle, more afraid for his companion than for

himself, threw himself back into the carriage; but he could only keep quiet for half a minute, and the first twenty horsemen had scarcely passed when he again leaned out of the carriage-window, gesticulating imploringly toward the stadtholder as he rode by.

William, impassive and retiring as usual, was on his way to the square to fulfil his duty as chairman. He held in his hand the roll of parchment, which on this festive day served him for a marshal's bâton.

Seeing the man gesticulating and imploring, and perhaps also recognizing the officer who accompanied him, his Highness ordered his carriage to stop.

In a twinkling his fiery horses, trembling on their powerful haunches, had come to a stand not six yards from the carriage in which Van Baerle was confined.

"What is this?" the prince asked the officer, who at the first order of the stadtholder had jumped out of the carriage, and was respectfully approaching him.

"Monseigneur," he cried, "this is the prisoner of State whom I went to seek at Lœwestein, and whom I have brought to Harlem as your Highness desired."

"What does he want?"

"He most earnestly entreats permission to stop here for a moment."

"To see the black tulip, your Highness," said Van Baerle, clasping his hands; "and when I have seen it, when I know what I desire to know, I am quite ready to die, if die I must; but with my dying breath I will bless your compassionate heart, which interposes between eternity and myself, and allows my achievement to attain a glorious reward."

It was indeed a curious spectacle to see these two men

at the windows of their respective carriages, surrounded by their guards, — one all-powerful, the other a wretched prisoner; the one about to mount his throne, the other believing himself to be on his way to mount his scaffold.

William looked coldly upon Cornelius as he listened to his vehement entreaty.

Then addressing the officer, he said, —

"Is this person the mutinous prisoner who attempted to kill his jailer at Lœwestein?"

Cornelius heaved a sigh, and hung his head. His good-tempered, honest face turned pale and red at the same instant. These words of the omnipotent, omniscient prince, his superhuman infallibility, which through some secret source hidden from the rest of mankind had already been apprised of his crime, seemed to him not only to make his doom more certain, but to presage a refusal of his last request.

He did not try to struggle, or to defend himself; and he presented to the prince an affecting spectacle of ingenuous despair, — a spectacle which was fully understood and felt by the great mind and the great heart of him who observed it.

"Allow the prisoner to alight," continued the stadtholder, "and let him see the black tulip; it is well worth being seen at least once."

"Thanks, your Highness, thank you," said Cornelius, nearly overcome with joy, and hardly able to stand erect on the carriage-step; "oh, your Highness — "

He could say no more; and without the friendly arm of the officer upon which he leaned, poor Cornelius would have thanked his Highness at full length in the dust.

Having granted this permission, the prince proceeded on his way among the trees amid the most enthusiastic acclamations.

He soon arrived at the platform prepared for him, and the thunder of cannon shook the air.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### CONCLUSION.

Van Baerle, led by four guards, who pushed their way through the crowd, made his way from the side toward the black tulip, which his eyes devoured more and more eagerly, as he approached.

He saw it at last, — that rare flower which was fated, under unknown conditions of heat and cold, light and shadow, to appear for a day, only to disappear thenceforth forever; that unique flower, which he was to see once, and no more. He saw it only six paces away, and was delighted with its perfection and gracefulness; he saw it surrounded by young and beautiful girls, who formed, as it were, a guard of honor for this queen of excellence and purity. And yet the more he ascertained with his own eyes the perfection of the flower, the more was his heart torn. He looked all around for some one to whom he might address only one question; but his eyes everywhere met strange faces, and the attention of all was directed toward the throne on which the stadtholder had seated himself.

William, upon whom everybody's eyes were fixed, rose, cast a tranquil glance over the enthusiastic crowd, and his keen eye rested by turns on the three extremities of a triangle, formed opposite to him by three persons whose interests were very different each from the other,

and in whose hearts very different emotions were struggling.

At one of the angles, was Boxtel, trembling with impatience, and quite absorbed in watching the prince, the florins, the black tulip, and the crowd.

At another was Cornelius, panting for breath, dumb, and with no glance or breath or heart or love for aught save the black tulip, his own dear child.

And at the third, standing on a raised step among the maidens of Harlem, was a beautiful Frisian girl, dressed in fine scarlet woollen embroidered with silver, and covered with a lace veil, which fell in rich folds from her head-dress of gold brocade, — in a word, Rosa, who, almost fainting and with eyes swimming with tears, was leaning on the arm of one of William's officers.

The prince, then seeing that all his audience were prepared, slowly unfolded the parchment, and in a calm, clear voice, which, although low, made itself perfectly heard amid the respectful silence which all at once fell upon the fifty thousand spectators, and stayed their very breath on their lips.

"You all know," said he, "for what purpose you have come together here to-day.

"A prize of one hundred thousand florins has been promised to him who should grow the black tulip.

"The black tulip — and this marvel of Holland is now put before you, — the black tulip has been grown, and fulfils all the conditions required by the programme of the Horticultural Society of Harlem.

"The history of its production and the name of its grower will be inscribed in the book of honor of the town.

"Let the person approach to whom the black tulip belongs."

As he uttered these words, the prince, to judge of the effect they produced, surveyed with his eagle eye the three angles of the triangle.

He saw Boxtel jump from his elevated post.

He saw Cornelius make an involuntary movement.

Lastly, he saw the officer in whose charge Rosa was lead or rather push her towards his throne.

A cry arose at once on the right and left of the prince.

Boxtel, thunderstruck, and Cornelius, in utter bewilderment, both exclaimed, —

"Rosa! Rosa!"

"This tulip is yours, is it not, my child?" said the prince.

"Yes, your Highness," stammered Rosa, whose touching beauty excited a general murmur of approbation.

"Oh," muttered Cornelius, "then she lied to me when she said this flower was stolen from her! Oh, that is why she left Lœwestein! Oh, heaven! forgotten, betrayed by her, — by her whom I believed to be my truest friend!"

"Oh," sighed Boxtel, "I am lost!"

"This tulip," continued the prince, "will therefore bear the name of its producer, and figure in the catalogue under the title, 'Tulipa nigra Rosa Barlænsis,' because of the name of Van Baerle, which will henceforth be the married name of this maiden."

As he spoke, William took Rosa's hand and placed it in that of a young man who rushed forward, pale, giddy, and almost insane with joy, to the foot of the throne, saluting one after the other, his prince, his betrothed,

and his God, who from His throne in the blue vault of heaven looked down with a benignant smile on the spectacle of two happy hearts.

At the same moment there fell at the feet of President van Systens another man, struck down by a very different emotion.

Boxtel, crushed by the failure of his hopes, lay senseless on the ground.

When they raised him, and felt his pulse and his heart, he was quite dead.

This incident did not disturb the festivities, as neither the prince nor the president seemed to mind it much.

Cornelius started back in dismay. In the thief, in the pretended Jacob, he recognized his neighbor Isaac Boxtel, whom in the innocence of his heart he had not for one instant suspected of such a base action.

Then, to the sound of trumpets, the procession resumed its march without any change in its order, except that Boxtel was now dead, and that Cornelius and Rosa were walking triumphantly side by side, and hand in hand.

When they arrived at the town hall, the prince, pointing to the purse with the hundred thousand florins, said to Cornelius, —

"It is difficult to say by whom this money has been won, by you or by Rosa; for although you discovered the black tulip, she nursed it, and brought it into flower. It would, therefore, be unjust to consider it as her dowry.

"Besides, it is the gift of the town of Harlem to the tulip."

Cornelius waited patiently for the prince's conclusion. The latter resumed, —

"I give Rosa the sum of a hundred thousand florins, which she has fairly earned, and which she can offer to you. They are the reward of her love, her courage, and her honesty.

"As to you, Mynheer, — thanks to Rosa again, who has furnished the proofs of your innocence — " And, as he spoke, the prince handed to Cornelius the famous fly-leaf of the Bible, on which was written the letter of Cornelius de Witt, and in which the third bulb had been wrapped — "as to you, it has come to light that you were imprisoned for a crime which you did not commit. This means that you are not only free, but that your property will be restored to you, as the property of an innocent man cannot be confiscated. Cornelius van Baerle, you are the godson of Cornelius de Witt, and the friend of his brother John. Remain worthy of the name which one of them bestowed upon you at the baptismal font, and of the friendship with which the other honored you. Cherish the memory of the signal virtues of both, — for the De Witts, wrongly judged, and wrongly punished in a moment of popular error, were two great citizens, of whom Holland is now proud."

The prince, after these last words, which, contrary to his custom, he pronounced with a voice full of emotion, gave his hands to the lovers to kiss, while they knelt before him.

Then, with a sigh, he said, —

"Alas! you are very happy, who, dreaming, it may be, of the true glory of Holland and her true happiness,

do not attempt to conquer aught for her except new colors for tulips."

And with a hasty glance toward France, as if he saw new clouds gathering there, he entered his carriage and drove off.

. . . . . .

Cornelius started on the same day for Dort with Rosa, who took care that her father should be informed of all that had taken place by the lips of old Zug, who was sent on a special embassy to the old fellow.

Those who have fathomed Gryphus's character from our description of it will understand that it was very hard for him to be reconciled to his son-in-law. He had upon his mind the blows he had received from the cudgel; he had counted them up by the marks that remained, — they numbered forty-one, he said; but at last, in order, as he declared, not to be less generous than his Highness the stadtholder, he consented to make his peace.

Appointed keeper of tulips, after having been keeper of men, he made the roughest keeper of flowers to be met in Flanders.

It was indeed a sight to see him watching the obnoxious moths and butterflies, killing slugs, and driving away the hungry bees.

As he had heard Boxtel's story, and was furious at having been the dupe of the pretended Jacob, he destroyed the observatory formerly built by the envious neighbor behind the sycamore; for Boxtel's estate being sold at auction was merged with the other flower-beds

belonging to Cornelius, who surrounded the whole with a wall to defy all the telescopes of Dort.

Rosa, as she grew more beautiful, also increased her store of learning; and after two years of married life could read and write so well that she was able to undertake by herself the education of two beautiful children which she bore in May, 1674 and 1675, like tulips, and which gave her much less trouble than the famous flower to which she owed them.

As a matter of course, as one was a boy and the other a girl, the former received the name of Cornelius, while the other was called Rosa.

Van Baerle remained faithfully attached to Rosa and to his tulips. The whole of his life was devoted to the happiness of his wife and the culture of flowers, in the latter of which occupations he was so successful that he introduced a great number of varieties, which may be found in the catalogue of Holland.

The two principal ornaments of his parlor were the two leaves from Cornelius de Witt's Bible in large gold frames. Upon one the reader will remember his godfather had written him to burn the Marquis de Louvois's letters.

Upon the other he had written his will, bequeathing the black-tulip bulb to Rosa on condition that with the hundred thousand florins as her dowry, she should marry some handsome young fellow of some twenty-six or twenty-eight years who loved her, and whom she loved.

The condition was fulfilled to the letter, although Cornelius did not die, — and in fact just because he did not.

Finally, to frighten away other envious people, whom Providence might not have leisure to rid him of as it had of Mynheer Isaac Boxtel, he wrote over his door the lines which Grotius had, on the day of his flight, cut on the wall of his prison, —

"Sometimes one's sufferings have been so great that one need never say, 'I am too happy.'"

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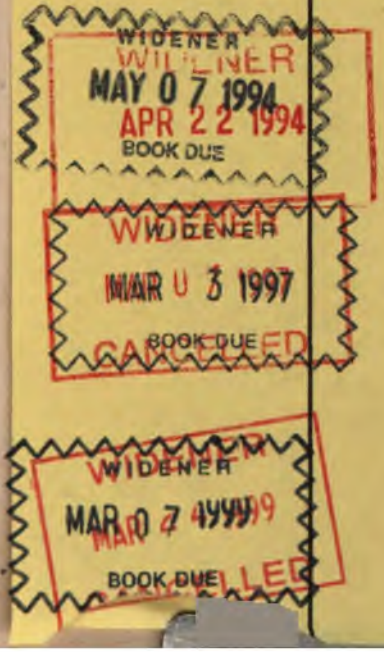
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